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TALE OF THE HIGHROAD

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

I AM THE HIGHROAD. Even as Ahalya lay turned into stone through the sage's curse, so have I remained lying inert for ages, by whose curse I know not, like a tremendously long sleeping snake stretching through woods and hills, under the shade of trees, across the broad expanse of fields, coiling around many a near and distant land. With infinite patience I lie prone in the dust, waiting for the curse to run its course. Although I am always fixed and immovable, always lying in the same position, yet I have not a moment's rest. I have not even the leisure to raise a single blade of fresh cool green grass on this hard dry bed of mine ; not even the time to make a tiny little blue wildflower grow at my head. I cannot speak, yet I can blindly feel everything. Day and night there is only the sound of footsteps. Nothing but footsteps. Amidst this deep dumb sleep of mine, the sound of millions of footsteps keeps revolving constantly like an evil dream. From the touch of their feet, I can read the hearts of men. I can tell who is going home, who is going to foreign parts, who is going to work, who is going to rest, who is going to a feast, who is going to a funeral. He who has a happy home and the shelter of affection, at every step he draws a picture of happiness, he sows a seed of hope ; one feels that wherever his footsteps have fallen there a creeper will sprout and bloom in a single moment. He who has no home and no shelter, in his tread there is neither hope nor sense ; his steps have neither right nor left ; it is as if his feet say-- why should we either go or stay.~ Such footsteps make my dry dust drier still.

I never hear till the end any tale of this earth. For

hundreds of years I have been listening to the laughter and song and speech of thousands of people, but I hear only a small portion. When I strain my ears to catch the remainder, I find that person is no longer there. Does anybody know how many snatches of talk and broken melodies have crumbled into dust with my dust year after year, and whirl about with it ? There, listen—somebody is singing : “The words I fain would say remain unsaid.” O passer-by, wait a moment, finish the song, let me hear the whole of it !—But no, he will not stay, he sings as he goes and the end is never heard. That single line will keep resounding in my ears through half the night. Who goes there—I shall ask myself. I wonder where he is going. Is he going to repeat the words that have not been said ? When he meets her again on his way, when she raises her face and looks at him, if he fails to say the words he fain would utter, then perhaps, turning his face away, with bent head he may come back very, very slowly and sing once more : “The words I fain would say remain unsaid.”

Somewhere or other there may be such things as permanence and finality, but I have not found either. I am unable to preserve the traces of even a single footprint for any length of time. Foot-prints are constantly being made, again new feet are wiping out the prints of the old. He who goes forward leaves nothing behind, and even if something from the load he bears on his head falls to the ground, it is trampled under a thousand feet continually and soon mingles with the dust. Yet I must say sometimes from the load of merit borne by great men, certain immortal seeds fall upon the dust, that sprout and grow permanently by my side and give shade to new passers-by.

I am the end of none, but the means of all. I am the home of none, yet I take every man to his home. It is my constant sorrow that nobody rests his feet on me, nobody wants to stand upon me. He whose home is far away curses me, but do I ever earn any gratitude from those whom I take so patiently to their front door ? In the home there is rest, in the home,

there is joy, in the home there is happy reunion ; but to my lot there falls only the burden of fatigue, only grudging toil, only separation. Will the waves of sweet laughter take wings and sail out from the windows of the home into the sunlight forever from afar only, and vanish suddenly into thin air as soon as they come near me ? Shall I never enjoy even a drop of the joy of home-life ?

Sometimes I do taste it though. Children come laughing and shouting to play near me. They bring the joy of their home outdoors. Their father's blessings, their mother's love, seem to come and make a home for them outside the home. They leave their affection in my dust. They pile it into heaps, and try to put it to sleep by patting it gently with their loving little hands. In the innocence of their pure hearts they sit and talk to it. Alas ! that it can make no response even to such great tenderness.

When their soft little feet pass over me, then I feel very hard indeed ; it seems as if it hurts them. I long to become as soft as the petals of flowers. Radhika has sung :

Where'er his rose-red feet pass by,
May earth like my soft body lie.

Why do these rosy feet have to tread on such hard ground ?— But perhaps if they didn't, green grass would never grow anywhere.

I know intimately those who walk over me regularly every day. They may not know it, but I wait expectantly for them. I have given them an imaginary form. Long ago such an one used to come every afternoon from a great distance, and two little anklets would tinkle crooningly on her two soft feet. It seemed as if those lips were not meant for speaking, as if those two large eyes gazed wistfully into one's face like the evening sky. There where a branch of mine turns towards the village, to the left of the brick bound banyan tree, she would come and stand quietly and wearily under it. At the same time another one would go towards the village singing, after the day's

work was done. Perhaps he looked neither to right nor left, nor stopped anywhere—perhaps he looked at the stars in the sky, and finished his even-song at the door of his home. After he had gone, the girl would drag her tired feet back along the way she had come. When she returned I knew the shades of eve had fallen ; I could feel the cold fingers of the dusk all over me. Then the evening cawing of the crows had stopped completely ; and travellers on the road were scarce. In the evening breeze the bamboo-grove made a rustling sound every now and again. Thus day after day, for several days on end, she would come slowly and go back slowly. One day towards the end of Falgoon, when clusters of mango-blossoms were falling in the breeze, the other one that used to come, came not. On that day the young girl returned home very late. As the dry leaves fell from the trees from time to time, so did one or two teardrops fall upon my dry hot dust and mingle with it. Again next day the girl came and stood under the tree in the afternoon ; but that day the other one did not come either. Again she slowly retraced her steps homewards. But after a while she could walk no longer, and fell down on me, upon the dust. She hid her face in both arms and sobbed her heart out. Who art thou, little mother ! Is it possible that anyone should seek refuge even in my breast, on this lonely night ? He from whom you have turned back, is he stonier than I am ? He who gave no response to your call, is he more mute than myself ? He whose face you looked into, are his eyes blinder than mine ?

The young girl rose and wiped her eyes,—leaving the highroad she entered the woods nearby. Perhaps she went back home, perhaps even now she goes about her house-work with a calm face,—perhaps she never utters a word of sorrow to anybody, only sits out in the courtyard some evenings in the moonlight with feet outstretched, and goes in with a start as soon as anybody calls her. But since that day to this, I have never felt the touch of her feet again.

So many footsteps have thus become silent, how can I

possibly remember them all ? Only the tender tinkling of the anklets on those feet comes to my mind now and then. But where is the time to nurse my grief ? For whom should I grieve ?-- So many come, so many go.

How burning hot the sun is. Heigh-ho ! With each outgoing breath of mine, the hot dust flies upwards and covers the blue sky with a brown haze. Rich and poor, glad and sorry, young and old, tears and smiles, birth and death,—everything passes over me in the same breath, flying past like a stream of dust. Hence the road knows neither tears nor laughter. The home alone laments for the past, takes thought for the present, looks forward to ~~se~~^{se} future. But the road is taken up with the thousand-and-one arrivals of every moment. Under the circumstances, ~~you~~^{you} would put their trust in their own high walks of life and, roudly stepping forward, seek to leave lasting footprints in such a place ? The sighs that you breathe into this air, will they remain behind and lament for you after you have gone ? Will they draw tears from the eyes of newcomers ? Air leaves no impression upon air. No, no, it is no use trying. I let nothing last— neither tears nor laughter. Only I stay on for ever.*

* Translated by Indiradevi Chaudhurani from the original Bengali story Rajpather Katha in *Galpaguccha*, Part I.

THE VISVA-BHARATI

By STEN KONOW

INDIA HAS BECOME FREE ; the freedom which all her old friends have been longing for, and all true Indians have been looking forward to, has at last been achieved. The last time I met Rabindranath Tagore he said to me : Welcome to India when India is free ; and his wishes were shared by other Indians and have now been realised. No wonder that we read about great rejoicings all over the country and we are all happy to know that England has retired from India voluntarily and without pressure so that there should not be any resentment in India and in England.

The two leading Indians who have more than anybody else led the way to this happy event, Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi have left us, but India's freedom is an established and, I am convinced, an unchangeable fact.

But new questions and new difficulties have come into being which must be carefully considered. There is no more one India but two dominions each with its own government and each with the right to separation.

We may even raise the question whether the Indians have at any time of their ancient history thought of their country as a unity. The Vedic Indians had no name for India, i. e. for India alone. We hear about a Bharatavarsha (which included Jambudvipa) where India was situated, but she had no designation of her own.

It was only when parts of India were included in the Achaemenidan empire that we get such a name, and it was then an Iranian and not an Indian one, Hindu, the Iranian form of Vedic Sindhu, which we still have in the name of the modern

Sind. The word Hindu then came to us through the Greeks, who spoke of Indos and India.

As far back as we can follow India's history we hear about wars and fights, not only between the original inhabitants and foreign invaders but also between the different tribes of the latter.

In bygone days we believed that the oldest invaders were the Aryans, Indo-European tribes who civilised India and became her masters. They even introduced their language into the greater part of Northern India, while other forms of speech, the so-called Dravidian tongues were used in the south, evidently because they had won a firm footing before the Aryans arrived there.

The great discoveries in the twentieth century have shown that we were to a great extent wrong. The Aryans did not invade a barbaric India but found a highly civilized population there.

We have become accustomed to speak of this pre-Aryan culture as the Indus civilisation, because the learned and intelligent Indian scholar Rakhal das Banerjee¹ was the first to prove its existence through excavations of an ancient site on an old branch of the Indus.

It looked like an ordinary Indian mound and on the top were remnants of a Buddhist building, which seemed to go back to the second century A. D. It was locally known as Mohenjo-daro, and this name was explained to mean "dead man's mound", but may mean "the Bassia Latifolia mound." When he dug deeper the finds began to change character. Several curious and evidently very old objects came to light. And on many of them he found something which looked like

¹ Rakhal das Banerjee—Well-known historian, numismatist and archaeologist. He is regarded to be an authority on the history of Orissa and Bengal. His researches on the Kushan Emperor Kanishka and discovery of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro brought him international repute. Died at an early age in 1929.

pictographs or hieroglyphs. A few such signs had been found long ago at Harappa on the Ravi, and learned scholars tried to interpret them, but in vain.

It is then clear that the designation Indus civilisation is too narrow, and we have gradually learnt to see that we have to do with an ancient culture which was distributed over a very wide territory, an ancient world civilisation.

The signs are so numerous that we cannot think of an alphabet. Some scholars have, however, thought of a prehistoric script and believed to have found similar signs on very similar Chinese objects, and one even in comparatively modern signs from the Easter Islands. Others have also tried to find parallels in the old Indian Brahmi alphabets. But none of these attempts has led to satisfactory or even likely results.

It has also been thought to be possible to arrive at a provisional dating, because antiquities which have evidently been brought from India have been found among Semitic objects from the third millennium B. C. and most scholars are of the opinion that this ancient civilisation goes back to this early time.

In some places we seem to find a deterioration and a decadence, and gradually the whole seems to disappear.

It has been assumed, and I think with great probability, that this was due to the Aryan invasion, which can hardly have taken place later than sometime in the second millennium B. C., and we have been reminded of a saying of a learned German Sanskritist that the highly admired Vedic mantras are the hymns of Barbarians to Barbarian gods, an opinion which is not however shared by all competent scholars.

What is certain, is that India was not in those prehistoric times, an isolated unity, but formed part of the world and had her share in the world's civilizing work.

And now, as I have already said, both Rabindranath and Gandhi are dead, and we can, to some extent compare their achievements with reference to the remarks made above.

It is evident that their horizons were different. Gandhi's

was in a way limited to India. His varying attitude towards the British rulers does not concern us in this connection, but it was always connected with Indian interests. And within India his aim was always to benefit the poor, the depressed and the casteless. It was then quite natural to him to recommend spinning and weaving, which would give farmers something to do in the season when there was no work on the fields and also bring them a small increase in income. And we also understand why he recommended the spinning wheel to those who were comparatively well off. That would show that it was not a degrading work and thus strengthen their moral conscience.

It seems to us that he was wrong in recommending a return to the simplicity of the ancient times. The highest classes could not feel well if cut off from all the commodities that progress had made possible. And, more especially, such must be the case with regard to religion. For religion is common to high and low and must satisfy both. Even the higher religious conceptions are of importance for the lower strata, as an example to be followed.

Gandhi was often disappointed in his endeavours. His recommendation of non-violence was often neglected, and the greatest disappointment must have been the last one.

Through his fasts he had forced the leading Hindus to acknowledge that the Muhammadans were co-citizens with right to equality. To us it seems as if this was the greatest result he had ever achieved through fasting and that it made him worthy to receive the peace-prize. And then a vile co-religionist, a Hindu, murdered him. In his magnanimity he made signs of forgiving and he breathed his last as a real saint.

Some people may think that his life-work has been a failure. But his preaching of non-violence is a seed which will grow and finally carry the day.

Rabindranath's attitude was quite different. He was a refined cultivated person, refined in his way of living and refined in his views and feelings. And his horizon was world-

wide. His Visva-Bharati was to be an open door between the East and the West, where they could co-operate as the bearers of the Indus Civilization had co-operated with the world.

This ancient people does not seem to have been warlike but to have devoted itself to peaceful work, and its example must have exercised its influence on the Aryan invaders. The Indians have never gone out as conquerors and invaders to foreign countries, but they have conquered large parts of Asia through their religious and spiritual ideals. The Aryan invasion may have been followed by others of which we do not know anything. On the other hand, we can say with certainty that foreign elements of more peaceful and ideal character found their way to India at an early date.

Such was the case with Christianity, for the Christian tradition about St. Thomas is not a fiction. The Portuguese found the descendants of the Thomas Christians when they came to India. But they had become "Indianized" to such a degree that the Portuguese whose religious attitude was more aggressive and bound up with inquisition and torture, found difficulty in considering them as co-religionists.

According to an ancient Indian saying man's food is also the food of his gods, *Yad-annah puruso bhavati tadannas tasya devatāḥ* i. e. man creates his gods in his own image, and we may add : man is older on earth than gods. Therefore we find that in India, the most-praised Vedic god, is called "*devānām indrab*" the bearer of manly vigour among the gods. And such was certainly the case with the god of the Portuguese : he was a cruel god. Earlier than the Portuguese the Muhammedans invaded India, and this time the difference in religion became more decisive, because the leaders of Islam have never been inclined to compromise. The masses, whether they were foreign invaders or Indian converts, were Indianized in so far as they would like to live together in peace ; but the leaders well understood that their own influence could be increased by instigating the masses to violent fanaticism, and over and over

again we have heard about wild clashes and great loss of human life. And such has been the case in quite modern times also.

Thirty years ago, it once seemed possible that Hindus and Muhammedans could join hands, when the Muslim League in the winter of 1916-17 accepted the Hindu claim for Indian independence, but this agreement did not last very long. The Muhammedans have not forgotten that they were once the rulers of India, and the recollection of the fact has not been suited to rouse enthusiasm among the Hindus, though they are often less self-asserting.

We well remember how the Muhammedan leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah not long ago proclaimed that the time had come for an internecine fight against the Hindus and was avidly acclaimed by his followers.

But his war-cry had to be abandoned *inter alia* because he has understood that there must be some agreement about a common defence. And we have seen that proposals were made at one time to bring about a certain unity in military command.

We have been told that India has an excellent army, trained in modern warfare by first-rate British officers, and some naive Indians who do not understand that they are so helpless, assure us that if an attack by a foreign fleet should be contemplated, the British fleet will defend the country, now that the British have retired from India !

India's position in the world is far from being secure. Dangers there still are. We do not know what the policy of the Soviet will be or which attitude it will take with regard to a possible Bolshevik propaganda in India. Japanese friendship cannot be reckoned as certain and the neighbouring Afghanistan may gradually extend her frontiers eastwards to the Indus river. And these dangers have not become less now that we have in reality two Indias.

In such circumstances we have to ask ourselves whether a real united Indian nation can finally emerge. Nay, we must even ask whether an Indian nation has ever existed.

There is no ancient Indian word which exactly corresponds to our term. We hear about *varna*, colour which distinguished the Aryans from the older inhabitants, but this word rather signifies race than nation. And we have *jāti*, birth, which is etymologically related to nation, but in reality means something quite different. A negro born on an American ship is an American by birth, but not by race.

There was a time when something like an Indian nation might have come into being comprising both the born Indians and their foreign rulers.

When the English decided to educate their Indian assistants according to British methods and to teach them English because they found this to be easier than to learn the older languages of administration properly themselves, there were several Indians who wanted to think and to be treated as Englishmen, just as the subjects of French colonies wish to be Frenchmen, and they do not seem to have paid attention to Macaulay's disparaging remark that a few lines of an English book were more valuable than the whole of Indian literature. When they occasionally came to England they were also often received and treated as citizens of the same Empire and, as they thought, as equals.

But when they returned to India they found they were looked down upon as inferior beings and this became more so when the British began to take their womenfolk with them to India. Even in quite modern times one can hear English women, married and unmarried, speak of the Indians as niggers.

The notion of an Indian nation thus easily came to be felt as a notion of difference from the British, something negative and that cannot well be the proper base of a nationality unless it knows that it can itself play a positive active role. The foul murder of Gandhi has shown how far removed India still is from being a real nation. It is not enough that Muhammedans and Hindus cannot agree, but there are also Hindus who are bitterly opposed to each other about their duties in the common State.

The outlook would seem depressingly hopeless, but I am an optimist and believe in a better future.

And now I would like to return to the Visva-Bharati and its future.

I well remember how its foundation was considered to be a grand event in the history of the world. It was to be a meeting place of earnest students from various parts of the world, and even the teaching staff was to come from different countries. I was proud and I am still proud that I was the third European² who was asked to come, and I am full of gratitude towards my co-workers for all they taught me. Much of it was along lines with which I was already to some extent familiar. But what Kshiti Babu³ told me about the Bauls⁴ was a revelation. Their simple and devout songs of God (who sends his invitation to the singer as his only guest) were something quite new to me. I know that the Baul songs have found their way to the houses of prominent Bengalees, but they have not lost their charm and vigour.

I took an early opportunity of visiting a gathering of Bauls and others in Kenduli,⁵ and the night I spent there I shall never forget

2 The first two visiting professors were Dr. Sylvain Levy and Dr. Maurice Winternitz.

3 Pandit Kshitimohan Sen Sastri, Principal, Vidya-Bhavana (School of Post graduate research at Santiniketan) is a recognised authority on medieval religious movements in India. He has done pioneer work on the life and work of Kabir, Dadu, Mirabai and other medieval saints and has published several authoritative books on the subject.

4 Literal meaning of the term is 'mad'. The Bauls are a non-communal god-intoxicated sect of people in Bengal. Some of them are secular and some roam about as mendicants. They make picturesque figures with their motly robes, the *ektara* - a one-stringed gourd instrument in hand, a drum to beat the time with tied to the waist and little bells tied round the ankle. They provide all the accompaniment necessary as they sing their mystic songs. They do not acknowledge class or caste, special deities, temples or sacred places, preferring the way of faith and love. Says Rabindranath : "The Bauls acknowledge none of the social or religious formalities but delight in the everchanging play of life, in which something may be captured in song through the ineffable medium of rhythm and colour" (*Religion of Man*).

5 Kenduli or Kenduvilva, a small village in the neighbourhood of Santiniketan is the birth-place of Jayadeva Goswami—Vaishnava poet of the 12th century A. C. He is acknowledged to be the greatest writer of songs in Sanskrit. A mela or country fair is held to observe his death anniversary round about the 14th January. Vaishnavas and others gather in large numbers at Kenduli on that occasion.

I spoke to one of them, and he said to me : If thou sincerely searchest God, thou art my brother to whichever religion thou mayest belong. And when it became dark in the evening they began singing, and songs in praise of God were finally heard from all parts of the big camp.

My dear wife and myself were agreed that the days we spent in the Visva-Bharati were of the happiest of our life. We were received with the greatest cordiality by the teachers. My wife became the friend and adviser of the young girls and I took up my teaching with enthusiasm.

Every weekend I delivered a public lecture, and young professors from the Calcutta University⁶ came up to be instructed in various subjects and became my dear friends.

Still greater joy I had when I began to go through Kalidasa's Sakuntala with the young girls and boys, each acting her or his individual part and I have never had a happier and more inspiring teaching.

And now I come to the point which has brought me to make these remarks : What ought to be the future aim of the Visva-Bharati ? It ought, I think, to be to realize the ideals of its illustrious founder, to create a new Indian nation, with full independence and including all Indians, in contact and collaboration with the whole world. It might seem to be a hopeless aim, but Rabindranath, whom we admired and loved, would not be deterred by difficulties, even such as seem insurmountable, and the best way to honour him would be to prove that his faith was justified. I am confident that it will be possible, but it is a difficult work which may take a long time. And the difficulties have become much greater now when we have not to reckon with one India, but with two different dominions, each with its own government and its own religion, and both with the same right to separation.

The Indian Independence Act of June 1947 will seem to

⁶ Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji, Dr. Kalidas Nag and several others.

many to be unsatisfactory and little hopeful. India and Pakistan are to be parts of the whole, and these two parts and their individual provinces will not always be separated with regard to their local position but frequently only with reference to their difference in religion. And we have no reason to think that they have become less inimical to each other than they have proved to be hitherto. We must be prepared to hear of conflicts and bloody encounters and some people will think that the framers of the act have shown little foresight and wisdom.

Both communities will in the first place have to come to an agreement about their policy.

The 254,930,536 Hindus certainly form the majority (65 per cent) of the population and must have the decisive power. But that includes that it recognizes its responsibility towards and protects the minorities comprising the 92,058,096 Muslims (24 per cent of the whole), and luckily there are signs which show that their leader Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has his eyes open for this responsibility.

And the Muhammedans must understand that they are a minority and cannot dictate the policy to the majority.

As we have seen there are signs which indicate that even Mr. Jinnah has begun to understand the real state of things, and that gives some hope for the future.

We all hope that the final result will be one India, because if there will not be *any* India any more.

We may even raise the question whether or not such a united India could possibly continue its existence as an isolated part of the world. It may have to collaborate with the outside world, *inter alia* on account of trade, which is equally important for both. And some of us may live to see that India will find it necessary to try to return to the British Commonwealth of Nations. And I am convinced that such a state of things would be the best solution of her difficulties.

It seems to me that here the Visva-Bharati ought to play an important role, and I trust that its leaders will succeed in

had were used to explore the city for miles round : Tollygunge (there were no modern flats there then) Kalighat ; Chitpore, Sealdah, Serampore, Nintollah, Howrah, the lanes and byways.

And there were the bazars, and the places where the *mistiri log* colonised pursuing their crafts until the going down of the sun, and sometimes after that, by feeble flaring smoky lamps. Everyone I contacted shewed me the most charming friendliness, and some would, with pleasant little fussings, wipe a box or bundle for me to sit.¹

Every "leave" was spent in seeing a little more of the people. Thus I got glimpses of, and visited the great areas between, Darjeeling, Benares, and Amber (Rajputana) ; Calcutta, Wardha, and Bombay ; Delhi, Agra, and Tutticorin with a prized visit to Madura, all of it engrossing me, and awakening me. And when illness directed me Home, in little more than three years, it was not the "brightest gem in the British crown" that I left, but a tremendously vast and wonderful land, with millions of poor, kindly, and terribly vulnerable people for whom I found I felt something like affection.

And then it was I heard about the Poet Tagore and sorrowfully realised what I had missed. In the score of years that followed, I read him with increasing satisfaction and deepening respect, and his teaching took on for me something of the quality of a Bible. *Gitanjali* and *Fruit-Gathering* especially became sources to which I might go for understanding and comfort, but also for strength and re-vitalising : wisdom distilled from human experience in dark valleys, passed through without bitterness, and to great enrichment. I dreamed of a day when I might go back and meet him. Meanwhile Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Barrister-at-Law, but describing himself officially as peasant or weaver, came into prominence, and despite all the contumely emptied on him by the British Press—

1 The only rudeness I have ever suffered from Indians was from two in the retinue of a minor rajah, who having been West, seemed to have suffered badly from association with the poorest manners there.

with a few redeeming exceptions—I recognised in him another of the Great. When, in regal meekness he left a prison, where he had been thrust by an authority incapable of understanding him, and undertook the toil of coming to the Round Table Conference in London in 1931, the Misses Lester who were his hostesses at Bow, most kindly enabled me to meet him and Mira Ben. His noble comportment under all circumstances ; his humility and supernatural self-sacrifice ; his simplicity and直ness ; his impregnable integrity and wiseness, won my allegiance to his great and reasonable cause. He seemed to me the spiritual brother of the Poet Tagore who in 1919 had in true high-mindedness renounced the knighthood (that had never seemed to me to sit comfortably on him) because of the reprehensible events in Amritsar in April that year.

Work for the society named the Friends of India led to my meeting Professor Amiya Chakravarty, then of Balliol. In 1925 it fell to me to organise a public dramatic reading by Mr. Laurence Housman of some of his own work. Housman was President of the Friends of India, and I secured Chakravarty for the chair—a fine double draw towards raising funds.

In extracting from Professor Chakravarty data for publicity I discovered that he had been Tagore's literary secretary for six years, travelling with him in Asia, Europe and America. (In the year of the Housman Lecture he was Senior Research Fellow at Brasenose.)

When my plans to visit India in 1938 were made, I wrote to Chakravarty and received a reply from Lahore in which he told me that he would be delighted to introduce me to the Poet Tagore. Arrived in Bombay, I found that he expected to be in residence at Santiniketan, and would make the introduction personally, which was very happy news for me. After a meeting with Gandhiji—which is another story—I went on across India to Calcutta.

A peculiar circumstance in my experience as to Santi-

niketan is, that while no one had, or ever has, said to me that its precise locality must be deemed a confidence, it was only when I had to get there that I probed the vagueness of "near Calcutta"; and I have never heard any one volunteer more than that. "Near Calcutta" had meant to me Howrah, or Sealdah, or Garden Reach, or one of the suburban "pores." I might have remembered that in a land where you may spend four or five nights in a train, "near" is relative. It took me five hours from Calcutta.

I always feel that an automobile is not the means by which one ought to traverse a small Indian town or village. It seems somewhat overbearing, and an imposition on a quiet-living folk; but Indian hospitality, studying a Briton, had provided this form of transport, and having silently confessed to Heaven my sense of sin in thrusting my vulgar modernity upon an inoffensive people, I adjured the driver to go slowly, and gave myself up to again enjoying the scene.

It was curious to feel myself slip into an aura of familiarity that was akin to coming home, but how different from the bustle of Britain! Here, time did not seem a taskmaster, but a companion, the day-to-day needs occupying lives, without creating a pall of exhausting urgency. How memory was stimulated by the smells, that potent contribution to the faculty without which man would be less than a beast. There were the smells of the earth itself and of cattle; of burning wood and dung; of cooking, and tobacco smouldering in hubble-hubbles; of strange food and exotic growing things, all enfolded in the Indian heat. And the sounds! Oxen bells, and of hakari drivers' goading cries; of itinerant artisans and tradesmen; of small shopkeepers and pedlars, all eking out a meagre livelihood; of children at play, their elders gossiping or chaffering, and over all that easing sense of time no longer urgent. How familiar, and friendly it all felt; and again, how humble and terribly vulnerable. It was all completely engrossing. It was so very absorbing that it did not seem many minutes since I

had left the small railway station and entered the little town, when I found myself in a bit of country that had become park-like. I realised that this must be the tract of land which had formerly been a bare and desolate place—the haunt of robbers—but which the Poet's father, the Maharshi Devendranath, had redeemed. And he called the name of the place SANTINIKETAN for he said, it is to be The Abode of Peace ; and there I was, approaching a lofty iron gateway with an inscription worked in over it, in an arc of metal.

It was delightful to find Amiya Chakravarty in residence, and I had not been many minutes in my room when—there he was at the verandah door greeting me benignly and saying that I would not know him in Indian dress. I wondered if he would know me, in shoes, shorts, half-sleeved shirt and topi ! I thought him a great "swell" in his correct white : surtout, jaunty tubulars, and smart sandals, all as natty as you please. Anyhow, there we both were, he giving me the grand welcome, and I feeling very happy.

On a memorable day, a generous hour before twilight, my friend Amiya came to conduct me to meet the Poet. The serenity of a cultured Indian is of the quality which only the East seems to have been able to evolve to so great a degree ; and I was favoured in having for companion one whom contact with the West had not marred, one who had been the Poet's daily confidant for years, and who remained a trusted friend. He was taking me into the presence of a seer, a mystic, a poet and one in whom the life-stream of compassion ever flowed ; and I rested in the assurance that he would mediate for me in my very conscious need.

Strolling through a part of the precincts new to me, we passed in by a gateway through a small thicket, to emerge on an open place laid out in gardened beds ; and on the distant side of them, a bungalow—a real pucca-built, Indian bungalow, that immediately made the impression of being just right. Not of great size, it was a few feet above the ground, surrounded by a

wide pavement and deep verandah reached by a short flight of graceful shallow steps. About it was an air of permanence, of something well-done ; and through the window I got a view of pleasant decoration, and of hangings ; and shelves and shelves of books. This, said Amiya, was the Poet's home, but explained that, not being quite well, he was living in his son's house where we were now going. I was impressed by its modesty, and in the same moment, as to its being a perfect human dwelling. The large house which we now approached seemed rather to tower and I found myself wishing I had been to meet the Poet in his own home that seemed to fit him as water does a fish.

As we approached the portico, a uniformed servant rose and gravely salaaming took our umbrellas and vanished. Salamining is apt to be confused in Western minds with recognition by the "poor Indian" of the superiority of Great White Chieftainship. This is a pity. It has in it, respect, but no less, courtesy ; and in such a case as this, I feel that it includes respect felt for the one who is represented by the gesture ; the courtesy due to any guest of the household, and a subtle hint—which certain types need—that respect and courtesy will be correct in those who enter. If this is a free translation, it is sobering, or bracing, as may be most suitable.

The servant returned in a few moments with a verbal message to the Professor, and responding, he led me round to a wide verandah on the left.

There, seated behind a simple, wide table, and looking the embodiment of veneration and wisdom, I set eyes upon Rabindranath Tagore, at the age of seventyseven, an impressive age in India.

As I approached, he bestowed a smile upon me, and extended his hand, inviting me to sit opposite. He was clad in white with a downy-looking *chuddar* disposed round his neck. His head was bare, the hair a crown of white with a regal gleam in it ; the beard just not-white, long and 'not thick. The skin was no more than sallow ; the nose a little disappoint-

ing but very kind ; the forehead less deep than I expected. But the eyes ! They were large, deep-set, rich brown, full of kindness and gentleness glowing as with wise things behind, that waited for understanding hearts to be touched by them. On the face were lines of experience that almost certainly included sorrow ; the whole figure one of benignity, and the regal wisdom that is bestowed on those who live in unceasing awareness of eternal verities. I instantly felt a barbarous child, foolish and stupid. But, I also felt happiness in just sitting in his presence. His voice was rich and gentle and he spoke in English with a fine choice of words. Soon after the preliminaries he said in a voice matured and rarified by age, "I am not now in close touch with affairs", a matter of fact, no doubt, but I seemed to catch in it a low assessment of "affairs" compared with where his own treasure lay. Amiya had been horrified when I told him how in commercial farming, cows were now milked by machinery, and he repeated this to the Poet. He seemed like one smitten, and looked at me as if he hoped I might make a correction. His head shook a little and he said with wistful resignation, "Man is just an intelligent animal". I quickly sensed that he was liable to be soon wearied. I was not sure that he was not being too gracious in seeing a stranger of no importance, so I did not delay longer in broaching a subject that had been on my mind for years. Let me remind those who read this of no. LXXVI in *Gitanjali* by quoting it in full to make quite clear what follows.

“Day after day, O Lord of my Life,
shall I stand before thee face to face ?
With folded hands, O Lord of all worlds,
shall I stand before thee face to face ?
Under thy great sky in solitude and silence,
with humble heart
shall I stand before thee face to face ?
In this laborious world of thine,
tumultuous with toil and with struggle,

among hurrying crowds,
 shall I stand before thee face to face ?
 And when my work shall be done in this world
 O King of kings !
 shall I stand before thee face to face ?

I said over the first few lines, and added, "I have always, always, felt that 'Shall I stand before thee face to face ?' is *not* a question. I've always felt that it is a prayer, in the spirit of, May it be that I shall enjoy that Presence !" The poet instantly lit up, as if the eyes as well as the ears were listening. He had become all alive, and I was aware of Amiya moving forward in his chair by my side. Then as with one voice, the act rehearsed, both spoke in Bengali, reciting, and stopped together precisely. The Poet evinced utter astonishment. In a voice into which I now heard a quaver come, firmness mingled with remonstrance, he said with great decisiveness, "But there is *no* 'question' about it. I am saying 'SHALL I STAND BEFORE THEE FACE TO FACE : I SHALL STAND BEFORE THEE FACE TO FACE.' I do not understand." He looked across at Amiya who shook his head as one does when there seems no explanation. They both quoted again. I produced from my pocket my copy of *Gitanjali* and opening it at the place, slid it across the table towards the Poet. "See" I said, "it is the mark of interrogation that is the mischief, is it not ?" I saw him scan the lines of his own creation with an interest and eagerness that seemed to be suffused with pain, and in the ticking seconds I had time to fear that I had distressed him. How long a few seconds can be ! A silence enwrapped us. Both poets seemed as those to whom something has been revealed. I was astonished, and even a little frightened by the effect of my query and the confirmation that I had sensed the true attitude of the poem.

He kept on scrutinising the lines as is the way of incredulity, and at last he spoke again. 'Yes, of course : that mark of interrogation ought not to be there'. I, in turn, felt at a loss but

found myself murmuring rather than saying, "And no one has noticed this ; and all up and down Britain, in the book and on illuminated sheets this printer's error is making the poem wrong". The poet kept on conning, as one goes over what one is facing having to believe, toying the while with a large fountain pen. The atmosphere eased a little and, prompted by that pen in his hand, I said, "Would you be so kind as to put your pen through the first mark of interrogation please ?". He did not speak, but very deliberately put his pen nib and the blackest of ink, through *all* the marks of interrogation. I watched the hand that seemed to tremble the merest quaver, and saw him linger as he did the last. Then obeying another thought, I said, "Might I have your initials at the end please ? It would be very kind". Again he did not speak, but added R. T. in a good firm hand. He sat turning over the pages this way and that, and lighted on the facsimile of the sketch of himself that is frontispiece to the book.² As if something quite new, he gazed down at it with every sign of being engrossed in what he looked like at fiftyone in his very prime, possibly reflecting that now he was of the aged. But before he quietly slid the book back to me, he had most kindly signed the portrait and thus made it a prized book, a great treasure.

As he returned the book to me, Amiya said, "Think of Mr. Rattray, who does not know Bengali, understanding the truth of the poem so well !" The Poet smiled ; and the spirit of a blessed fraternity seemed to descend, in which for a few rare seconds, I felt that they had included even myself. We sat a little in quietude, and then I seemed to see the Poet wilt a little. I recalled his song of the great freedom, "By all means they try to hold me secure who love me in this world, but... thou keepest me free" and I rose saying, "You are weary now I think. I will go". He smiled again and our hands met

2 It is the 1914 Macmillan edition. The sketch-portrait was done by Rothenstein in 1912. I do not know of any other correct version of this particular song. There cannot be many (if any) so corrected.

across the table. He pressed mine, and I leaned over and kissed his. I said, "It has been a great honour to meet you Sir : Blessing on you always." I stepped back, we exchanged *namaskar* and in a few moments Amiya and I were silently strolling down the wide path. Then, in his rich simplicity that conveyed more than the words, he said with gratifying geniality, "That was very, very nice : a very successful interview" ; then on again in the silent dew of darkness.

... And so came gentle night to seal a great day in my life within the Abode of Peace. Seated at my verandah door, and looking out into the dark sky, lit by many stars, I could hear the yodelling peculiar to Indian music, supported by the urgent syncopation of a tomtom. Into my mind came, and comes again the music and spirit of a great Christian prophecy :

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. . . . And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground, springs of water. . . . And a highway shall be there. Upon it shall be writ in gold THE SACRED WAY. Over its stones the unclean shall not pass nor foolish men who are but wayfarers. It shall not be for those : but the redeemed shall walk there."⁸

⁸ This rendering is from "Isaiah : A cosmic drama" : J. Todd Ferrier : The Order of the Cross, London.

KARL MARX AND GANDHIJI

By K. N. BHATTACHARYA

KARL MARX AND GANDHIJI are the two great men who have most profoundly influenced the life and thought of the present-day mankind. Both have preached doctrines which are sincerely adhered to by a large number of persons in all parts of the globe. The messages they have left are accepted as almost articles of faith, and have inspired in the hearts of millions the abiding hope for a new order of equality, justice, love and truth.

Yet the similarity between these two great men should not be over-stressed, for their dissimilarity is even more pronounced. Karl Marx and Gandhiji have different approach to life, and the basic assumptions of their doctrines have nothing in common. To be more precise, these two great men stand on two different planes, wherefrom, each on his own plane, views life, analyses its problems and plans reforms. Faiths built under such radically different conditions are bound to be widely divergent. If a gradation of planes is admitted, then the difference between the stand of Karl Marx and Gandhiji makes the quality of their greatness also intrinsically different. For a proper evaluation, Karl Marx and Gandhiji must therefore be viewed from their own planes which will give us a correct perspective of their character, contribution, and of all that they stand for.

So far as the life-plane of Gandhiji is concerned, our knowledge is sure enough. Gandhiji's life is on the moral plane. His name stands as a symbol of moral faith. His own words, which are unambiguous, explain the position better. "Who am I?" writes Gandhiji, "I have no strength save what God gives me. He will give me the strength and show me the way....Nothing can happen but by his will expressed in his eternal changeless

law." This supreme faith in God, surrender to His will, and the readiness to be used as an instrument for the fulfilment of His mission are the elements that constitute the essence of Gandhiji's greatness. God is the fundamental purpose which gives Gandhiji strength and character and an overbearing force to his very dynamic life.

Contrast Karl Marx with Gandhiji. Speaking of God, Karl Marx wrote : "Such an idea (God) is nothing but the order of a very disorderly mind." And further,—"Man is...only the instrument of which the idea or eternal reason makes use in order to unfold itself." If we believe, like Gandhiji, that man is only an instrument, and the "fullest life is impossible without an immovable faith in a living law", then according to Marx, such a thing is possible "only within the mystic womb of the absolute idea."

In matters of faith, Karl Marx and Gandhiji are at opposite ends. If Gandhiji is on the moral plane, then in its opposite, Karl Marx belongs to the material plane. Starting with his immovable faith in God, Gandhiji in his daily work and conduct gave a moral interpretation of life ; with an opposite assumption of disbelief, if not disdain, Karl Marx gave a material interpretation of history. With Gandhiji, life is the 'sacred history' of moral ends, to Marx it is the 'profane history' of material progress.

The difference in the life-plane of Karl Marx and Gandhiji explains their totally different attitude to problems of reform,—its plans, means and ends. Realisation of God's purpose must necessarily come from within, and Gandhiji is therefore emphatic about the need for inner reform which alone conditions outer progress. In Gandhiji's own words : "The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is the correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated upon achieving reform from within."

Comparison of Karl Marx with Gandhiji, on this issue, is again an interesting contrast. Marx has no notion of inner

being. Matter is external, and on the material plane, he only understands an external life. A change in the external and material condition of living is all that he envisages in his reform. The question of inner progress is superfluous, for the idea of inner being is only a Hegelian Viellenie (old junk), or at best a product of material conditions. To quote his own famous words : "Material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life." And to make the issue more clear, he adds : "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness."

While it is not the intention of this paper to offer any judgement on the merits of the respective approach of these two great men to human problems, a comparison of the implications of Gandhiji's doctrine of inner reform with Marx's emphasis on outer social existence throws interesting light. To Marx, consciousness, as we have seen, depends on external conditions. In other words, what man is, is not because what he has aspired to be, but because what he is permitted to be by external conditions. In other words, man is not a master of his own destiny who controls his environment, but a conditioned being whose height and stature, both moral and material, depend on external social conditions. To accept this doctrine in its totality is fatal for human dignity. For, in that case, man becomes merely a tool, and his mind ceases to have any function in relation to his environment. Marxist doctrine reduces man to the state of a being without a mind, a product of material conditions, and while trying to improve his material life, Marx has undermined the inherent glory of his inner being.

On the other hand, Gandhiji, by his life and conduct, has emphasised the victory of mind over matter, of morals over externals. He upholds the inherent dignity of man as a moral being, and points to his inevitable destiny of glory and freedom. Critics of morals are apt to ask : Can mind flourish unless external conditions prove favourable ? Has morality any signifi-

cance unless material needs are properly adjusted ? We do not presume to answer the questions, but all that we can do is to posit the counter questions : Can external conditions flourish unless the mind is properly developed ? Is happiness possible unless man has learnt to master the real art of moral well-being ?

The application of moral principles to all aspects of human living gives us the clue to the proper understanding of Gandhiji's concepts of economics, politics, and other social problems. In this respect, Gandhiji's concepts of economics and politics are generally very much misunderstood. It is commonly believed that Gandhiji's economics consists of simplicity, charkha, absence of industries, and village revival. In a similar manner his politics is believed to be based on non-violence, village panchayet, communal amity and satyagraha. With best of intentions, most persons are honestly unable to comprehend how such an economic and political system can possibly work. Obviously it can not. But on the contrary, it can if the significance of Gandhiji's basic assumptions is fully realised. The truth is, Gandhiji's economic and political systems do not mean mere simplicity and non-violence. But what they really mean is the existence of moral laws operating in our daily life ; and economics and politics, based on such moral laws, will tend to move in the direction in which Gandhiji has given the lead. It is not so much the form, as the spirit behind them, that is what counts in Gandhiji's systems. As Gandhiji himself has put it : "That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values... True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good economics". In other words, it will not be possible to remove present maladies as long as man remains what he is, and better societies can not be created unless man himself becomes moral.

And how is this final end of moral transformation to be achieved ? By truth, love, discipline and purity which mean "our realising that it is through suffering that we are to attain

out goal." Truth is one and all-pervasive. Not for one moment can we be deflected from its path ; violence and falsehood must be clearly eschewed. True ends cannot be attained by false means. "They say" writes Gandhiji, "means are after all means. I would say means are after all everything. As the means so the end...Realisation of goal is in exact proportion to that of the means".

Compare this doctrine of purity, truth, love, and peace with the loud and discordant note of dialectic, class-struggle, revolution and dictatorship. "The knell of capitalist property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated". The threat to violence was more clear in the communist manifesto : "We traced the more or less veiled civil war raging within existing society upto the point where that war breaks out into open revolution".

And yet one may ask to what end is this violent revolution directed ? Merely for the establishment of a class-less society ? And supposing dialectic has played its part, revolutionary upsurge has taken place, all classes have been abolished, and proletariat dictatorship has been established : what then ? Will men grow wiser and behave better ? Will there be peace and good-will—justice and happiness which mankind so passionately long for ? The answer is dubious. For there is nothing to prove that men will then behave better, and peace and good will will descend on earth. "There is but one revolution that avails" wrote Ibsen, "It is to revolutionise men's mind." Proletariat revolution does not necessarily herald that mental transformation of mankind. And unless man's moral will is fully developed, our final goal can never be reached

Gandhiji is a hope and pointer to the revival of that moral faith which mankind so badly needs. Man will have to be a moral being, whatever the external condition, and we cannot postpone being moral until proletariat revolution is complete. The impact of moral force itself will make any such revolution unnecessary.

Lastly, it is interesting to note what Gandhiji himself thought about Marxist revolution. These are his words : "Bolshevism is only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord, or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion, there would be nothing like it. But from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective state ownership. And if that be so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime in its present form can not last for long. For it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence."

The truth is Karl Marx visioned the true end, but standing on the material plane he confused the means. On the moral plane Gandhiji gave us the vision of truth—truth that pervades both ends and means.

GANDHIJI'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

By P. S. NAIDU

THE MOST revealing philosophy of life, which influences a man during his brief sojourn on earth, is not the philosophy which he consciously formulates or expounds for the benefit of others, but that deep-seated philosophy imbedded in his Unconscious, which directs and controls his daily conduct. Gandhiji was influenced by such an unconscious philosophy and I propose to undertake the task of essaying an analysis of the Mahatma's subtle yet powerful *Weltanschauung*.

Twentieth century philosophy and twentieth century psychology are agreed in holding that man is moved irresistibly, often violently, by some tremendous upsurge of life energy. Our contemporaries have set aside the static conceptions of man and his behaviours upheld in past centuries, in favour of a dynamic conception. A mysterious life principle, call it *elan vital*, *libido*, *horme* or life energy or what you will, is moving man implacably. Whether it will move him forward or backward will depend on man himself, but move, it must, man and his institutions. Among the pioneers of this dynamic conception of human life we may mention Henri Bergson, Sigmund Freud and William McDougall. These three leaders of thought have done more to throw light on the secret springs of human behaviour than any others among European thinkers of recent times.

THE UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS OF SATYAGRAHA

Moved by the life urge man is out to conquer external nature. Man has been truly defined as a conquering creature. He loves

to meet obstacles, to try his strength on them and to overcome them. All of us under normal conditions are bent on making conquests in our daily life. But, unfortunately the distance between conquest and destruction is not great, and a few steps are all that are needed to cover it. Now man started conquering nature by his scientific inventions and discoveries. This is but a harmless pastime, but soon it developed into a dangerous pursuit of conquest of human beings with the help of tools forged out of the fruits of scientific discoveries. Conquest of nature was thus used for the destruction of human beings.

Alongside the conquest of nature and conquest of nations there developed another type of conquest, namely, self-conquest. This was the special achievement of the Eastern nations. But those individuals who were engaged in the practice of self-conquest tended to neglect the world and retire into the seclusion of forest retreat or mountain heights. Their achievements were staggering, but they came to look on the world as essentially evil.

The irrepressible urge of life in man seemed to drive him in two directions ; one of conquest and *destruction* of nature and of the brother man, and the other of self-conquest and the *neglect* of brother man. Both directions are unattractive and unsuitable to the present age. Is there no third line of development open to man ? There is and that is the line which *Gandhiji has opened out by his technique of satyagraha*. Non-violence is really the result of a synthesis of the urge to conquer the external world and the urge to conquer the inner self. Fasting and non-violent resistance are, no doubt, meant to conquer man, but it is a conquest of love. And in the process of this conquest of what is outside, the inner self gets purified and conquered. Gandhiji saw clearly that in this dynamic age man is out to do and achieve something. And he hit open satyagraha as a tool for achieving great things without harming any one. The canalisation of life energy along the channel of satyagraha is one of the greatest achievements of the present age.

FASTING AND SILENCE AS WEAPONS OF A SATYAGRAHI

In his attempts to perfect the technique of non-violence Gandhiji introduced at different stages the tools of fasting and silence. There has been some misunderstanding of these items in the general programme of satyagraha, particularly of fasting. We, ordinary men, view fasting only on its negative side, we believe that it is deprivation of nourishment to the body. Fasting is equated to starving, and is condemned on grounds of self-inflicted cruelty which induces sympathetic suffering in the minds of friends, relatives and admirers. That fasting has a positive spiritual role in the life of a seeker after truth is not readily seen by the common run of human beings. So long as we live and move in this world, the powers of our mind and soul have to manifest themselves through our body. It is through the organs of the body that we spread our influence over other people. Through speech, through looks, through gestures and through our general behaviour, we try to act on others and their minds. Now, the gross body often hinders us in the full exercise of our mental powers, and when a great soul desires to reach out to the masses for their good and for their uplift the body acts as a hindrance to his efforts. Fasting then purifies the cells and lifts them up to the plane where pure thoughts of love and peace can readily pierce through them and conquer the evil tendencies of the masses. Moreover when a high-minded person fasts (not starves) his energy, which according to contemporary psychology is limited in quantity, is not employed in digesting food and in eliminating the waste products in the service of self enjoyment, but is all diverted into the channel of self-control and self-purification. The finer spiritual forces of love and peace innate in us find, in this purified mental energy a friend and an ally and not an enemy in the battle for the conquest of fear and hatred. Body, under the influence of a non-violent fast, becomes the true vehicle of the immortal soul, the fit channel for the outflow of divine love.

Silence ranks next to fasting in its potency for spreading love and peace.

When one observes silence, one imposes on oneself severe restrictions over verbal communication with others. Naturally, visitors keep away from a silent man. The outgoing tendencies of the mind are checked and mental energy is turned inwards, with the result that the silent person is forced to introspect. And introspection is bound to lead sooner or later to the cleansing of mental dross. Self-examination through introspection will make us conscious of our faults and failings. Soon the desire to avoid these will arise in our mind, and the desire will ultimately be realised in action. Self-examination and the resulting self-purification and self-conquest are the beneficent results of silence. When the self is purified, then the forces of love and peace, hitherto suppressed by the evil tendencies of an impure self, will break forth and spreading out into the external world will win a rare victory over fear and hatred.

THE SPINNING WHEEL

If I am asked to suggest a symbol which will epitomise the message of Gandhiji in all its manifold aspects, I will unhesitatingly mention the spinning wheel. Learned economists have made a thorough analysis of the economic principles underlying the charkha. Political theorists have seen in it the virtues of decentralisation and the recognition of village sovereignty. And Gandhiji himself has expounded, in his articles in the *Harijan*, the doctrine of non-violence that underlies the charkha. But behind all these excellent expositions of the fundamentals of charkha philosophy there is something deeper, some force working at its roots which merits our consideration. The charkha demands concentration of attention to a much greater degree than any modern machine. It is a machine, no doubt, but it is a machine which keeps you alert all the time. And even when you have acquired some degree of proficiency, you will have to be all

eyes and hands in handling the charkha. You may spin in the company of others, but you cannot afford to gossip with others or crack jokes if you are aspiring to be an artist in and not a mere artisan in spinning. The result of this demand on the mind of the charkha-devotee is that a habit of self-denial and self-control is steadily acquired. The musical hum of the charkha is not only pleasant to the ear, but it imposes a certain degree of restraint on the outward flow of mental energy. It was a gifted Christian missionary who drew my attention first to the potency of the charkha to instil into minds right habits of introspection. "In the vast inner silence created by the charkha, the mind is forced to meditate on the higher values of life. And this meditation is bound to lead the devoted charkha enthusiast to the path of realisation". This is a secret which is not readily visible even to those who have worked in the Gandhi Asrama for a long time. From the silent turning of the charkha to concentration, from concentration to meditation on the values of life, and thence inwards to the realisation of truth—that is the path which the true devotee of the charkha traverses, and there can be no purer path for a karmayogin.

The detached karmayogin cannot stay long in the state of meditation. He must leave his secluded retreat, and plunge into the world, giving it of his best. The devotee of the charkha must lay aside his wheel, and go out into the world to discharge his duties. It is then that the spiritual strength which he, if he is of the right type, would have gathered at the time of his devotional spinning, would stand him in good stead. He will discover that he can constantly draw on his inner reserves of strength to conquer the evil forces round about him. But his conquest will be of the non-violent type. He will conquer death with life, falsehood with truth, evil with good and cruelty with love.

This, then, is the secret hidden in Gandhiji's practical asceticism. It is true that he has disavowed in public all claims to the title of a karmayogin. But whether he is conscious of it or not, his practical life is the expression of a

well-knit *Weltanschauung*. This *Weltanschauung* is rooted in a belief that fasting, silence and non-violent spinning are powerful weapons for disciplining the inner self and for releasing the pure spiritual forces hidden therein. And when the occasion demands it, these forces may be pressed into the service of the satyagrahi in his campaign for conquering evil and hatred through love and peace. .

REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

The Vertical Man, A Study in Primitive Indian Sculpture. By W. G. ARCHER. London : Allen and Unwin, 1947. 122 pp. Pls. 48. Rs. 12-0-0.

The Vertical Man treats of Indian peasant sculpture in two of its regional styles, in West Bihar. Peasant sculpture in India finds in this book, for the first time its place in the total of Indian art production.

The basis of its styles is called "vital geometry"; this geometry is evocative, full of tension and rhythm. As distinct from mathematical geometry. Vital geometry imbrues in the shape, is its fundamental framework and not superimposed on it. The two styles depend upon the material of the carvings ; and with these, namely stone and wood, are linked the castes of stone cutters and carpenters respectively. The stone images are essentially planear, the wooden ones three dimensional. Both are at one in the verticality of their coherent elements. The degree to which planes, lines and volumes are organised in each of the groups of vertical men are of psycho-morphic suggestiveness : slab or pillar figure appear as embodiments of the "heroic" : it is presented in its brutal, pathetic and superhuman aspects.

The impact of these powerful forms on sight and touch conveys their meaning. It centres in the worship and legend of Bir Kuar, the cattle god of the Ahirs.

The ritual of Bir Kuar is recounted, the songs translated by a magic of simple words. The actors in the ritual are akin to figures in mystery plays, or those by Pirandello. The posts and images are installed at times of major crisis to receive favour from Bir Kuar. "It is because Bir Kuar demands the images and in return for receiving them will make the buffalos fertile that the styles of sculpture exist".

The myth of Bir Kuar is reconstructed from many of his legends and their different versions. In this part of the book reconstructing logic rounds off the story and the conclusion is that Bir Kuar, the cattle God, whose function is to stimulate fertility is "a form of insurance against crises of fertility failures."

In the myth Bir Kuar tells his castesmen, the Ahirs, to set up a pair of wooden posts and after that to worship him. The carpenter plays

his part in the legends. Stone has not their sanction. The carpenters are descended from Visvakarma. The wooden form of the image-posts is ancestral, the carved stone slabs are of supplementary importance.

Notwithstanding the intrinsic distinctions of the stone from the wood carvings, both are done according to the traditional style prevailing in the respective locality "to satisfy a known demand". Although the craftsman "when he is carving a Bir Kuar image does not feel that he is doing anything different from what he is doing when he shapes a grinding stone" he has—unconsciously—a definite style in shaping the image. The supernormal power to which he gives shape compels its 'vital geometry', the potent visual effectiveness of its image. While a grindstone has its price the making of an image of Bir Kuar is a work of religion. No price is demanded for it, a present is accepted when the image is delivered to its owner.

The Vertical Man, A Study in Primitive India Sculptures, succeeds in linking form and myth, in defining the form and re-living while reconstructing the myth. Detailed local informations are collected. The conditions and reasons by which the images get their shape are given. A living, traditional practice is here analyzed from within its structure as well as from its perimeter whence the extraneous factors, social, economic, etc. exert their pressure. "Why the styles are what they are" is said in this book and can be said because their practice and meaning are still there and because the author combines knowledge and sensibility, a knowledge which springs from sensibility to visual form and the added sensibility to verbal expression. In the text of this book—and not only in its poetry—is compacted the total experience of Bir Kuar, the cattle god of the Ahirs in West Bihar. Excellent photographic documentation completes this first monograph on one kind of primitive Indian sculpture. The subject and its treatment are of primary importance. The vital geometry of the images is translated into the vital language of this pioneer book. The power of the myth, the compelling effect of the images live in its pages and address themselves to all who have eyes to see so that they may share with the Ahirs the myth of Bir Kuar.

Stella Kramrisch.

Dance in India. By G. VENKATACHALAM. Bombay : Nalanda Publications.
131 pp. Price Rs. 9-0-0.

The so-called cultured circles in India have begun seriously to consider the claims of Dancing as an art of self-expression, during the course of the

last twenty years or so. During this time, we have come across discussions dealing with both theoretical and practical aspects of Dancing and a number of publications on the subject have also appeared. The most outstanding among these, is the book under discussion.

Divided into two parts the book gives a critical appreciation of the art of nine well-known dance-artists of our times—both men and women—and then passes on to discuss the four principal schools of Indian Dance—Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri. The twentyfour basic 'mudras' of Indian Dance, have been described to the readers both through illustration and explanations. Altogether there are about forty-seven plates of different sizes—some of them in colour—to enhance the attraction of the volume.

A book of this type, discussing in detail the contribution made by some of our top-ranking artists, is hard to come across. Those who have no academic interest in Dancing as such but nonetheless enjoy it as a form of cultural entertainment, will find in it a rich fare. The author has done well to avoid technicalities and make his subject interesting to lay-readers. Although he has not given biographical details to any great extent, he has eminently succeeded in portraying the artists as living personalities.

The chapter on Bharata Natyam which appears in the second part of the book, is easily the best piece of writing. It gives much information which is otherwise inaccessible to the general public.

Certain observations made by the author call for comment. While comparing the special merits of Indian Dance with the same form of art flourishing in the other parts of the world he remarks :

"India developed dancing into a very elaborate science, Barring the Russian Ballet, there is hardly any other form of dance which has attained the same classical height".—p. 1.

"There is no other dance art in the world to be compared with it (Bharata Natya).—p. 95.

"Kathakali is one of the most highly perfected pantomime arts in the world."—p. 100.

"In representing bhayankara and bibhatsa rasas on the stage the Kathakali actors cannot be excelled by any in the world."

One is apt to feel a little suspicious of such sweeping and hyperbolie statements unless they are backed by good and sound logic.

While comparing the art of three well-known exponents of Bharata Natyam, the author says :

"Amongst these is Balasaraswati ; as an exponent of Bharata Natyam, there is none in the rising generation to equal her."—p. 18.

"Among its living exponents and interpreters, Srimati Rukmini Devi easily stands supreme."—p. 24.

At another place, he extols Srimati Santa and pays her the following compliment :

"The finest flower of Bharata's ancient art". "The most conscientious Bharata Natyam artist". "Her repertoire in Bharata Natyam is, perhaps, richer than of any other artist that I know."—p. 34.

Such handing over of superlative praise to all three, is very naturally apt to confuse the general reader.

The author has confessed, in the prefatory remarks to his limited knowledge of Kathak and Manipuri schools of dance. No wonder, therefore, his ideas on these dances are rather hazy and vague. For instance, while discussing Manipuri dance, he remarks :

"Being Radha-Krishna dance, the part of the gopinis is played by young girls, and the only male dancer is the boy who plays the part of Krishna":—p. 118.

In actual fact, in *Mahārāsa* dance of Manipur, the role of Krishna, surrounded by gopinis, is played by a small girl and not by a boy. According to the author, "Kathakali gave birth, at a distant date, to the Javanese and Kandyan dance".—p. 100. We beg to differ.

While introducing Uday Sankar the author has observed : "Like Tagore he was discovered first in Europe."—p. 57 While this remark may hold good in the case of Uday Sankar, it certainly may not in the case of Rabindranath Tagore. Much before he won his Nobel Prize and European recognition, Rabindranath had already made his mark as the most prominent literary figure in the land of his birth. The Nobel Prize, it is true, only helped to spread his reputation which he had so indisputably established. The same cannot be said about Sankar—who was little known in India, prior to his appearing on the stage as Pavlova's partner.

Elsewhere, while speaking about Bharata Natyam the author remarks :

"An ancient art like the Bharata Natyam admits little room for any improvement or elaboration by modern dancers."—p. 67.

One can hardly help remarking that it is a poor view to take of a living art to say that it will remain static and that it will "admit little room for any improvement". A historical study of Bharata Natyam will surely show that while it always retained its position of pre-eminence it was changed or modified according to changing circumstances. Its present form has evolved out of these changes. The way Bharata Natyam has attracted the attention of some of the most talented creative artists of modern times, is sure to

bring about some change or modification in its form and technique. It may well be that this change—when it comes to take place at last—will be all to the good for the cause of the art of dancing in India.

Santideva Ghose.

Of Cabbages and Kings : By HUMAYUN KABIR. Hind Kitabs Ltd.,
Bombay. 238 pp. Rs. 4-0-0

This nicely got-up collection of miscellaneous speeches and addresses by Janah Humayun Kabir, described by a University contemporary as "one of the greatest products of Modern Oxford", would perhaps be more aptly labelled as "The Growth and Development of Humayun Kabir, Poet, Professor and Politician". For, in it is clearly reflected the mental and intellectual growth of one who has dabbled in many things and none without a touch of brilliance or considerable success. The book begins with a few addresses by the author, obviously carefully prepared and well rehearsed "extempore" orations as a bright Oxford Undergraduate in the Union and ends up with a number of speeches delivered as a sobered fledgling 'elder statesman' in the Bengal Legislature. A perfectly understandable urge for epigrammatic wit and facile phrase making in the Union, in the course of fifteen years, almost imperceptibly effloresces into expressions and reasonings of balanced sobriety of mature judgement.

Some of the twenty-one addresses, which make the book, have dated and are no longer of any practical interest to-day ; most of those delivered in England hardly have or could ever have had, any importance to the average Indian reader. But there are a few speeches which deal with problems which still confront us and would be read with considerable profit. Of particular interest is the last contribution, an address delivered as the President of the Bengal Provincial Teachers' Conference,—Education and Nationalism. He speaks with fervour about the breakdown of the educational system in India to-day and rightly diagnoses the disease in the hiatus created between the educational aims and social needs. He holds, along with all right-thinking educationists, that mere literacy is no education and passionately appeals that the control of education must be entrusted to persons who have devoted their lives to it. The Government of the Union of India have already taken a step in that direction ; we have to-day a scholar-statesman at the helm of the Ministry and he is assisted by a distinguished professor-cum-Vice-Chancellor as his Secretary and his Advisor is none other than the distinguished author,—or, should one say, the speaker, himself. May we then hope, now that Mr. Kabir has the power, he will put, or at least try to put, into

practice what he has been advocating with so much brilliance and ardour all these years.

A. K. C.

Diplomatic Service in Free India. By INDRA DATT. Indian Book Company Ltd., Lahore and Delhi. 128 pp. Rs. 6-0-0.

This is an informative book on an interesting theme and would prove useful to the students of undergraduate classes. In no way, however, should it be considered as anything more than a students' manual on the subject. At times, one is persuaded to consider it as a mere paraphrase of Harold Nicholson's well-known book on Diplomacy. But as a professional teacher, the author knows very well to gild his wares and the book therefore is pleasant reading.

Unfortunately the book which must have been very hurriedly printed to fill up a vacuum in the Indian book-market, suffers disastrously at the hands of the compositors. (It would be unkind to attribute such a plethora of silly mistakes to the learned author). The word "Chargé d'Affaires", for instance, has been given a novel combination of letters in practically every separate use of the term. Some times very tortuous expressions have been used which make it difficult to follow the author's exposition. It certainly takes a good few minutes to unravel the writer's mind when he speaks of "The Home Minister for Foreign Affairs."

The most original contribution of the author, to justify perhaps the title of the book, (Diplomatic Service in *Free India*) is to be found on page 94 where he has given a full chart to describe his proposed scheme of the working of the Indian Foreign Ministry but it reveals itself to be more of a jig-saw puzzle than a working arrangement. There is however good material in the book, which, with a more careful editing and careful printing, would considerably enhance its value in the next edition.

A. K. C.

Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru. By K. R. KRIPALANI. Hind Kitabs Ltd. Bombay. 104. pp. Rs. 1-8-0.

Destiny has been generous to our former Editor, Mr. Kripalani in having brought him into intimate personal contact with his heroes,—nay gurus,—a privilege and honour not always shared by writers of biographical sketches. Mr. Kripalani is primarily a thinker and is not afraid to think afresh for himself even about things taken for granted ; in the result his

writings are always fresh and new. His language is pleasant and graceful and we are grateful to the publishers for having given us in book form his scattered essays on some of our greatest men. But such a good book deserved a better fate at the hands of the publishers : better paper, better printing and an artistic general get-up would have made the book a delight to preserve in one's collection. We hope the publishers would not disappoint us with the next edition.

A. K. C.

Eminent Indians. By D. B. Dhanapala. Bombay. Nalanda Publications. 180. pp. Rs. 7-4-0.

Mr. Dhanapala is a well-known journalist in Ceylon where he has a wide reading public. He writes with a refreshing gusto and has a good command over language though at times he seems to take liberties with his grammar. This is easily excusable in a journalist who has to write at a high speed and must care more for effect than for grammatical niceties.

Mr. Dhanapala is catholic in his taste and one would welcome his writing about people who, normally speaking, might not hope to figure in a book of this sort. Most writers of cameo biographies seem to exhaust their enthusiasm with statesmen and politicians. He has written on an art critic like Venkatachalam and a cricketer like Nayudu.

The book is pleasant reading and not a few would finish the book at one sitting. Mr. Dhanapala has the knack of coining happy phrases and enlivens his writings with interesting anecdotes which add considerably to the charm of the book. He is bold with his opinions and even with his expressions. To describe Mr. Amarnath Jha as having "a touch of the polished goonda" requires both keen power of observation as well as some daring. How beautifully he sums up Mrs. Naidu when he says that "she speaks polities but in the words of a poet" !

He seems to have met and known personally the people he has written upon though there are occasional mistakes in detail. Pandit Jawaharlal, for instance, is anything but six foot four and Babu Rajendra Prasad, notwithstanding his chronic asthma, is certainly not "undersized in appearance," and "thin like a sandwich."

A. K. C.

Modern Indian Culture. By DHURJATI PRASAD MUKHERJI. (2nd Edition Revised and Enlarged) Hind Kitabs Ltd. 235 pp. Rs. 6-8-0

Prof. Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji is well-known in India as a writer of repute. He wields a facile pen in English and Bengali alike. The book

under review is a sociological study of some of the aspects of modern Indian culture. It may be presumed that the author's aim is to acquaint the average educated reader with a brief account of Indian culture and in that he has succeeded. Specialists will not find enough information in the book that will enrich and synthesise their ideas. The significant thesis of the author is the growth and decay of a 'counterfeit class', the so-called Middle Class of India which had no moorings in the social, economic and cultural traditions of the country. We fully agree with him when he says that the Middle Class once performed certain functions, now it has none. He suggests certain remedies for the deteriorating Middle class of India. "So the Middle Class will have to realize, here and now, that its old role in History is over and that its new role is with others whom it has so long unwillingly ignored" p. 214. Indian Culture has to be re-made accordingly. The omission of political values has made the author's arguments weak in certain places. The get-up of the book is good but the list of errata annoying. References at the end are helpful though the remarks of the author cannot always be accepted.

Benoy G. Ray.

The Tales and Teachings of Hinduism. By D. S. SARMA. Hind Kitabs, Bombay. 176 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.

Principal D. S. Sarma is well known as a champion of Hindu culture. He has written a few instructive volumes about the different aspects of Hinduism. The book under review is intended to be used as a text-book in High Schools. The first part of the book deals with an outline of Hinduism and the second part gives a brief account of the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the *Leelas* of Lord Krishna and a few legends from Hindu Epics and Puranas. The book has been lucidly written and the author's objective has been amply fulfilled. It is hoped that the book will be translated in the major languages of our country.

Benoy G. Ray.

Indian Industry Today and Tomorrow. BY E. DA COSTA. Calcutta : Longmans, Green & Co Ltd. 166 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.

Those who intend to have a general idea of the present position of industries in India, their problems, possibilities, lines of development and the organisation necessary for them in the changed political condition

of the country, will be benefitted by going through this book. The author has portrayed a picture of the industrial position from the proper perspective. He rightly points out that the absence of detailed statistics regarding our natural resources, present production in different industries, the insufficiency of institutes for industrial research, the dearth of technicians and trained workers, the shortage of machineries and other equipments, the miserable condition of service of the workers and their low standard of living, the unscientific management, want of targets of production and any planning on a sound basis, and, above all, the inefficiency of the administrative machinery have been some of the causes that are responsible for our present unsatisfactory economic condition.

While discussing about employment, the author says that in India, unlike in other countries, the problem is really of production of consumer goods and not their demand. In his opinion, the idea of stimulating demand by indiscriminately raising wages is wrong, for, this will knock out many small concerns and eventually aggravate the position of unemployment. The doctrine of higher wages, he says, is applicable only to very big concerns. As a measure against unemployment, he advises the employers to reduce the number of working hours. This naturally presupposes fixing production targets. If the targets of production are fixed, reduction of working hours means employment of additional hands. The author cites the examples of U. S. S. R and Great Britain where the policy of lower hours has been successfully followed with good results. The reduction affects both the employers and the employees, but it should be judged from the point of view of unemployment question and interest of labour as a whole. Besides, we do not think that the principle of reduction can be adopted all at once in this country without first of all bringing about a change in the mental outlook of the employers and the employees, so that, in the words of the writer, "both recognising their overriding duties to the whole country, will be prepared to surrender selfish and sectional interests for the sake of the nation."

The author has broadly discussed which industries should be nationalised and which ones left for private enterprise, and has given reason for his opinion. He is quite right in saying that there are risks of monopoly, profiteering, uneven distribution etc. that are detrimental to the public interest in the case of private enterprise. But state-ownership of industries, on the otherhand, is not always an unmixed blessing ; if the inefficiency and other vices of the administrative authority are not eliminated, nationalisation of industry will be far from beneficial.

There is no doubt that with regard to the matter of targets of

production, the primary end of the planners should be to satisfy the basic needs of the people. It is therefore necessary that the determination of targets is very carefully made. In a planned economy, so long as production does not exceed the target, it should be the responsibility of the State and not the producers to bother about the surplus, if any. The question of surplus, the author remarks, does not arise in the case of the targets proposed by the Bombay Planners, for, he says, the targets are very low, and the reasons put forward by him seem to be quite sound. Nevertheless, he observes that it will be extremely difficult to attain even those low targets unless we can improve organisation, arrange for manufacture of necessary machineries in our country and are able to take the help of foreign technicians. We quite agree with him in this point of view.

He rightly puts all emphasis on the need of judicious planning. For the carrying out of the plan, he proposes that there should be a Supreme Planing Body consisting of the best talents of the nation, that the decision of the Body should be final, subject to the overriding approval of the Legislature and that there should be three Commissions, one for trasport and power, one for industry and the third for agriculture under the Body.

The author has confined his subject practically within the limits of big industries only. He would have done well, if he had mentioned this in his Introduction, or better still changed the title of the book accordingly. Further, we do not like the way he has said only a few words in connection with the topic of employment. The little mention that is made, is not with a view to indicating how far small industry should be incorporated into the industrial structure of the country, but, unfortunately, to compare it with big industry. The question of comparison of the nature indicated by him does not arise at all. We have the conviction, that when planning is judiciously made, the two types of industry may be made to have distinctly separate courses or provinces, and as such, they will not only not clash but also be complementary to each other. What readers expect of him is not comparison but a clearcut opinion on the place he wants to give to small industry in the plan. We hope, in the second edition of the treatise, he will make his position clear and not bypass this important issue. We are of the opinion that for many reasons we cannot afford to omit small industry.

S. Bhanja.

Indian Summer. By JOHN ARLOTT., Calcutta 13 : Longmans, Green & Co.
17 Chittaranjan Avenue. 141 pp. Rs. 4-8-0.

This is a delightfully written account of the Indian Cricket Tour of England in the summer of 1946. The summer was a rain-rotten one and

a sore trial to the Indian tourists ; but they bore it with good humour and did credit to themselves and to Indian cricket. An Appendix, which the author sarcastically proffers to "these statistically-minded readers who suffer from appendicitis", shows that the Indian record was by no means discreditable, some individual performances like those of Merchant and Mankad being outstanding. Their courageous performances as a team in tight places compelled respect for them from the beginning of the tour. There was not one of the sixteen who did not on some occasion make a great and courageous effort against the run of the game, like the last wicket stand of Banerjee and Sarwate for 240 runs, which carried the Indian total of 205 for 9 to 454, in one of the first matches of the tour. Similarly, their very last match at Scarborough was saved as a draw from an almost inevitable innings defeat by a determined eighth wicket stand by Amarnath and Banerjee.

Written in a breezy style, with a thorough knowledge of English and Indian cricket, of players and pitch alike, the book makes delightful reading and is valuable in the lessons the tour provided. Pen pictures of Indian and English players at the end of chapters show intimate knowledge and respect for them. Such is his comment on Mankad, India's great all-rounder : "He belongs to cricket, cricket is richer for having him and I am happy to know him for my friend." Defending the Indian skipper, the Nawab of Pataudi, against strictures on his captaincy he says, "I was, and am for him ; I should be happy to play cricket under his captaincy."

The illustrations in it, numbering eight, lend added interest to a book that ought to find many readers among cricket-lovers in India.

S. K. G.

Christian Prayer and Approach to Christian Mysticism. By W. Q. LASH : Bombay : Hind Kitabs Ltd. 52 pp. Re. 1.

This is an essay on Christian Mysticism by a Western Christian, now a Bishop in an Indian diocese. Having had some acquaintance with Indian mysticism and basing the book on lectures to a mixed audience of Hindus and Christians, the author draws some parallels between Christian and Hindu mysticism. But the understanding shown of non-Christian treasures of the spirit is not very profound or appreciative. Nor is the adventure of Christian mysticism presented alluringly enough as a call to every believer to follow the gleam, as far as he can, along the trail so gloriously blazed by the saints. It is unfortunate that the author should have sought to interpret mysticism in terms of Magic, though of course in its best sense, as higher

knowledge attained through ritual practices, belief in the preventient grace of God being however pointed out as an added feature of Christian mysticism. A far more helpful and acceptable presentation of the mystic way and goal is that of a far better-equipped, though a non-ecclesiastical, student of mysticism, Gerald Heard, in his two pamphlets, *Training for the Life of the Spirit*. Therein he depicts the attainment of the higher consciousness, the conscious realization of union with *That*, as the goal of human evolution, the realization by man of his divinely appointed destiny.

The whole thought of the writer is conditioned and, I would say, vitiated by his proposition stated again and again that "there is no Christianity outside the Christian society". But the united testimony of mystics in all religions, *the untethered saints*, as they have been beautifully called, is that however valuable churches and their rituals may be, human souls can attain to unmediated communion with the Ground of All Being. So to tether Christian mystics within the bounds of institutional religion and to define the unitive stage as at best only union with the incarnate Logos, and the Beatific Vision as contemplation of the Divine Trinity, is to import human conceptions into, and institute boundaries in, a realm that is beyond human definitions and distinctions.

Elements that are held distinctive in Christian mysticism, like the unfailing fruit of virtue, of heroic living, as the test of spiritual growth, are pointed out in an essay which, though in an elementary manner, covers the whole range of the mystic path and its goal.

S. K. G.

Freedom's Battle : I. N. A. In Action, 1942-45. Illustrated and Compiled by VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI. N. M. Tripathi Ltd., Kalbadevi. Bombay. Rs. 12-8-0.

The exploits of the Indian National Army during the last phase of India's struggle for freedom are too wellknown to need repetition. It was an unforgettable episode and caught the imagination of the youths (and old men) of this country as nothing else did. As the compiler says, "It was for the first time since 1857 that the Indian soldier gave his loyalty to his motherland and not to the oppressor". The I. N. A. was Subhas Chandra Bose's creation and he was the I. N. A. His personal courage and devotion to his men were unsurpassed, because he was not a professional soldier, but a patriot and even the smallest of the men were to him part of himself.

The book under review gives one a moving glimpse of the great experiment, chiefly with the aid of rare photographs. It also gives one a lot of useful information regarding the I. N. A., e. g. the posts held by different ministers in the Azad Hind Government and details of the arrangements at the historic trial. In fact it may be termed as a 'documentary'. The printing and general get up of the book are of high quality.

J. N. S.

This Strange Adventure. Ed : FREDOON KABRAJI. London : New India Publishing Co. Ltd., Sole Representatives in India : Bombay : Hind Kitabs Ltd. 140 pp.

This is an anthology of select poems in English by Indians, covering well over a century. In the interesting introduction the editor (who, by the way, is himself one of the poets included in this selection) has retold the fascinating story of how verse-writing by Indians in an alien and 'barbarous' tongue burgeoned and followed its own lines of an emergent evolution. The impetus came from more sources than one. What was remarkable was a sense of discipline, more in form than in content, which characterised the general output of these poets. There were obvious difficulties : English is a squeamish language—a fastidious medium to handle. Besides, "the true gold of poetry of the Indian genius is not for export". And yet "this strange adventure" went on and has now come to its own, despite its patronising critics beyond the seven seas.

This is a fresh anthology. The editor has chosen with a purpose and what is uncommon (and therefore welcome), he knows his selection intimately and critically. He has not hesitated to include significant translations from Indian poetry into English, such as those by Prof. Puransingh or Dr. Coomaraswamy. Indeed all was grist to the editor's mill, provided it was good poetry or at least typical poetry.

The assiduously compiled notes are useful and the 'Who Was and Is Who' makes an interesting reading. There is a brief list of "suggested reading and selected bibliography" at the end, but "neither the one nor the other is intended to be exhaustive".

M. Bajpai

Poems : By SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora : 1947. 67 pp. Rs. 1-14-0 (Superior Binding).

A collection of stray 'poems, songs and hymns' of Swamiji, written either originally in English or translated from their scattered Bengali,

Sanskrit and Hindi sources. They reveal a comparatively less-known aspect of that opulent personality which was Swamiji's, crystallising his mystical experiences and visions. The language has a seizing force and a compelling vivacity all its own. Exactitude of form or technical perfection is not the object here ; the object is to achieve an unhindered outpouring of the soul in its encounters with the Infinite. A divine afflatus informs these poems which will ever remain a source of abiding inspiration.

M. Bajpai

The Tulip of Sinai. Translated from the Persian of the late Sir Muhammad Iqbal By Prof. A. J. Arberry. The Royal India Society, 3 Victoria Street, London, S. W. 1. 1947. 36 pp. Sh. 7-6 net.

The prefatory note tells us : "The verses here translated form a section in the *Payam-i-Mashriq* of the late Sir Muhammad Iqbal, a volume of poetry composed, as the author has declared, in reply to Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*. In these poems Iqbal expresses those characteristic doctrines which are well summarised in the preface to Prof. Nicholson's translation of his *Asrar-i-Khudi* : that book may with profit be used as a commentary on *The Tulip of Sinai*.

The book contains 163 brilliant quatrains. Despite the conspicuous difficulties of translating a poet so richly allusive and subtly suggestive as Iqbal, the present translator has achieved outstanding success, in as much as these poems have an authentic flavour and freshness savouring of an original composition. A definite philosophy of life and human destiny underlies all Iqbal's work. Self-realisation is the keynote of his poetry. Indeed Iqbal is in line with the great oriental poets to mingle poetry and philosophy in a happy wedlock.

The notes at the end will prove particularly helpful to readers not conversant with the Islamic lore.

M. Bajpai

Edgeways and the Saint. By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA. Nalanda Publications, Bombay 1947. 54 pp. Rs. 1-8-0.

Edgeways stands for the poems and *The Saint* is a farce in prose.

Few poets enjoy the verbal felicity which is Harindranath's assured privilege in the realm of poetry. He is a prodigious artist whose defiant individuality belies the fetters of conventional morality. His diction has a racy strength and a sharp conciseness. The poems often reveal an

imaginative interpretation of the poet's socialistic creed but their 'philosophy' is nebulous. Lovers of Harindranath wonder how he manages to escape that deepening influence of years which invests all genuine poetry with an intuitive coherence, a profundity, unless we are seriously to believe with the poet that he writes poetry merely "by way of relaxation". When, however, the sincerity of feeling simplifies itself into an unpretentious avowal of a rich experience freed of its artificial shibboleths, the result is nearly always satisfactory.

In *The Saint*, Harindranath exposes the follies or a credulous populace too prone to believe in the so-called miracles. A spirit of mockery prevails in this farce. The invective used is of a rather cheap and popular variety. To scoff at God or the mystic is much in vogue today, but we hope that the present burlesque purports to discountenance only pseudo-mysticism, leaving the authentic one to its own divine peace.

M. Bajpai.

Freedom Come : By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA. Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Sh. 1/6 ; Cents 25. Rs. 0-12-0.

The Birth of a Nation : By RAMAN K. DESAI. Aundh Publishing Trust, Aundh, Distributors : Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay. Rs. 0-6-0.

Freedom is Here : By G. N. ACHARYA. Compiled by S. Karing Doyle. Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay. Rs. 1-8-0.

Three beautiful brochures published on the occasion of the memorable 15th. August, 1947.

The first is a sparkling stream of fine poetry.

The second is a paper on Nationhood. The author combines vision with scholarship.

The third is a collection from the writings of G. N. Acharya, "recounting" as the compiler says "dramatic episodes from India's struggle for freedom".

All three were timely publications and the authors and the publishers have perhaps amply been rewarded by this time, much more than can be expected from a reviewer's pen. The readers cannot however repress a woeful memory. It took the Congress more than three decades before it could reach the masses. We may not repeat the mistake, while spreading the message of freedom to the millions, by limiting the scope of our efforts through the use of a foreign medium.

S. S.

Gorky Anthology. Published by KUTUB PUBLISHERS. Bombay. Printed on Indian hand-made paper. Rs. 5-0-0. (Soft Cover).

"The selections presented in this volume" says the introduction, "are representative and will help the reader to make the acquaintance of one of the master-engineers of the human soul".

Eight of Gorky's famous stories including Twenty-six Men and a Girl and Chelkash are here reproduced. There is nothing special about this anthology to distinguish it from the others of its kind but for the appendix portion which gives some of Gorky's not-too-easily accessible writings. These are Two Letters to Romain Rolland; a fairly long extract from Gorky's autobiography *In Service* where he remembers "the burdensome humiliations, insults and alarms which my swiftly developed passion for reading brought me"; an address on Problems of Soviet Literature which shows Gorky as an erudite scholar and guide. There is also an interesting study by Prof. S. Balokhaty dealing with Gorky's estimate of Pushkin's importance in Soviet Literature.

We commend the novel experiment of printing such an important publication on Indian hand-made paper. The soft cover, however, is not quite suitable, as many readers would like to preserve a book of this kind in their library shelves.

H. D

LOVE'S PRICE

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

TEMPT me not to load my boat with debt,
but give me leave to go away empty-handed,
lest the price of love that you recklessly pay
should only reveal the poorness of my heart.
I can but litter your life with shreds of my pain
and keep you awake at night
with the moan of my lonely dreams.
It is better that I remain speechless
and help you to forget me.
While walking on my solitary way
I met you at the dusk of nightfall.
I was about to ask you to take my hand
when I gazed at your face and was afraid.
For I saw there the glow of the fire that lay asleep
in the deep of your heart's dark silence.
If in my frenzy I waken it up into flames
it will shed a glimmer
on the brink of my emptiness.
I know not what sacrifice is mine
. to offer to your love's sacred fire,
I bend my head and trudge on to my barren end
provisioned with the remembrance of our meeting.

Translated by the poet from the original Bengali poem *আশঙ্কা* (Assanka) appearing in *পুরাণী* (Purani). The poem is dated Buenos Ayres, Nov. 17, 1924. Published by courtesy of Surendranath Kar from Ms. in his collection.

THE FRENCH LITERARY MIND

By WALLACE FOWLIE

I

IN THE LITERARY TRADITION OF FRANCE, eloquence, both oral and written, is a ceremony. It is true that in every literary tradition, eloquence by its very nature, must become to some degree the stylization of language, but in the French the instinct to make of language a highly formalized expression is deeper and more permanent than in other traditions. Each of the great masterpieces in French literature seems extraordinarily aware of the public to which it is addressing itself, of the presence of a public, of a public mind which must be subjugated and enchanted according to well-established rules of subjugation and enchantment.

And that is why the first trait of the French literary mind always seems to be its sociability or even what we might call its worldliness. The French writer is always addressing some one even when he is speaking on that subject which has become one of his favourites since the days of the Renaissance when Montaigne wrote his Essays : the subject of solitude. Because of this attitude of the French writer, which is more an instinct than an attitude, born of a need to communicate and to establish a relationship between his thought and the minds of other men, his works are characterized by a tone of bareness, of separateness. They often give the effect of arias sung in the midst of great silence, sung at some distance from the world, even if they are directed toward the world. This is sometimes described as the classical spirit in French art, and works composed in this spirit have the inflexions of a pleader and a lawyer whose skill is used to combat and convince and seduce.

Such works, and they have occurred at all periods in French history, illustrate the solitude of literary speech. But such speech-solitude, because of its ceremonial aspect, is flood-lighted. Its contrived effect, so carefully planned to provoke, hold, subjugate and enchant, may often appear a pure theatricality. The writer in the French tradition resembles a performing artist. In French schools the primary literary exercise is that of textual explication, by which a single page of a writer serves to reveal his particular art and thought, and even the art and thought of his period. Only a very highly self-conscious and even histrionic art would permit such examination and such treatment, whereby a novelist would be studied not in his novel, but in a single paragraph from his novel, and where a poet would be studied in a single sonnet. This habit of study has helped to convert French literature into a series of celebrated set-pieces. Renan is known for his prayer on the Acropolis and Proust for the passage on the madeleine cookie dipped in a cup of linden tea.

A single page can be separated from its book and exist autonomously in its own brilliance, in much the same way as a speech in a French conversation may be struck off from its context and found to be a distinct and singular creation. At dinner parties, where the guests are French, the general effect may be that of conversation or at times of hubbub, but when listened to more attentively, the conversation of the ten dinner guests, if there be ten, will turn out to be ten monologues, each recited simultaneously and independently. French eloquence, both that in print and that produced orally under the stimulus of a physically present public, is expression ritualistically conceived.

The reason for this solitariness of the French literary voice, what we might name the primary secret of the French literary mind, is the fervent identification it establishes with the past. If the finished product of French writing often gives us the impression of an aria sung in the centre of a vast space, of a

form stripped of non-essentials and bare in an almost heroic vulnerability, we know that its strength comes from its alliance with an allegiance to the tradition of its past. The dependence of a French writer on other writers who preceded him is acknowledged and emphasized. French art is knowingly the renewal of tradition and not the discovery of the new. The writer in France learns his particular role and vocation in terms of those past writers with whom he is in sympathy as well as those with whom he is in disagreement. Many French masterpieces have been born from a quarrel. The loneliness of the French writer, which now might be termed his uniqueness, comes from this will to determine himself by his affiliations and disagreements. The French writer knows that originality is an unimportant and even an illusory goal in art. The seeming new really draws upon the old.

I have taken courses in French literature both in America and Paris where the professor actually never got to the author announced as the subject of the course, where all the time was spent in discussing the forerunners of the author. We learned all about the reading which the author had accomplished during his lifetime and to what degree he had been influenced by them, but when we finally arrived at the work itself, the final lecture had been given, and all we had learned was what the literary work had come from and nothing about what it was.

Such an approach, which treats literature as a renovation of the past, as a prolongation, rather than as an original creation, explains to some degree the attitude of the French people toward their writers. The pride which the French feel in their writers and their awareness of them even if they do not always read them, are traits found more in French than in other countries. The recent death in Paris of Paul Valéry, in July 1945, became an event of national significance. I refer to the example of Valéry in this connection because he is as far removed as it is possible to be from the type of popular writer. As a poet he is one of the most difficult France has ever produced, and one who will

rank amongst the greatest ; and as a prose writer, he is even more difficult. The stylistic and philosophical difficulty of Valéry's art would seem to relegate him to a very small circle of initiates, but it is a fact that, even long before his death, he was a universal figure in Paris, a symbol and justification of French pride in literary tradition.

In the homage which France has paid to Paul Valéry, the dignity of the literary mind has been extolled once again. The case of Valéry signifies that once more in France acknowledgement has been made to the belief that the literary artist, no matter how esoteric or difficult, represents a significant fusion between the present and the past. Valéry has not always been kind or approving in his treatment of the past. He has derided, for example, and in a tone of considerable malice, some of the most hallowed sentences of Pascal, sentences which have been explicated for generations in the lycées and universities, and precisely those belonging to passages which we have been calling arias. But the French, as well as possessing a sense of tradition, have an iconoclastic sense which rather enjoys a scene of destruction, when it is carried out with deftness and critical sharpness. Valéry's very attack on the sentences of Pascal has thrown them into greater relief than ever, and one day there will be books written for and against Valéry's attack on Pascal.

If Valéry is anti-Pascal and anti-philosophers in general, he is on the other hand a disciple of Mallarmé, who directed him closely in his vocation as poet. The discipleship has helped to define Valéry's particular position in French poetry and to redefine the art of his master. Valéry's debt to Mallarmé is so significant that professors in future courses on Valéry will perhaps not feel compelled to go beyond a discussion of Mallarmé's poetry.

The French, more insistently than other national groups, use the names of their writers as symbols which stand for much more than the actual literary work. They represent attitudes of mind, and efforts which have been successful in varying degree,

to study the mystery of man. The French use the names of Racine, Descartes, Villon as others say Orpheus, Socrates, Venus. And the writers also use these names, almost as talismans or as saints and sinners who are invoked during the writer's self-examinations. The literary past in France is constantly testifying and representing. Thus Valéry orientates his own thought by declaring himself a critic of Pascal and a disciple of Mallarmé.

The art of speech in France is almost identical, as we have said, with the art of persuasion. One of the surest means to persuade is to speak intimately and personally, to take the reader into confidence, to speak confidences. When the French writer employs this device, he speaks, not about his mother or wife or child as the writer of another tradition might do, but about the author whom he reads passionately and with whom he has formed a spiritual liaison. Baudelaire is most personal when he writes of Edgar Allan Poe ; Claudel when he tells the effect of Rimbaud on his life ; Valéry when he describes his conversations with Mallarmé.

At moments of national crisis, the French turn to their writers, because the writer is by definition in France the man who writes about the world of his heart but who also looks at the world itself and seeks to integrate in his writing some considerations concerning the affairs of the world. On the one hand, Valéry can compose such a pure poem as *Narcisse*, which contains the description of a forest scene and the exploration of a psychological dilemma. And on the other hand, he can write such an article as *La Crise de l'Esprit* which, although it was written soon after the end of the first World War, stands to-day as one of the most penetrating statements on the political and sociological dilemmas of modern man. The first sentence of the essay has become a celebrated exordium in France : *Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles.* It is this kind of sentence we have been trying to describe as the beginning of an aria. It is both resonant and arresting : "We civilizations know now that we are mortal".

It has the solitariness of a single voice speaking to a vast public which in this case is France and the modern world. It is the voice of a pleader who is going to speak, through deep sensitivity to the past, to his own world on the subject of the abyss of history.

So the literary mind of France, nourished as it is on the past, may analyze whatever subject persists in tormenting man : politics, morals, theology, philosophy. Literature, the most complex of the arts, involves all these subjects and many others, and in France, more than in other countries, the people turn to the particular form given to these problems by the literary artist. The ideas of the 16th century are perhaps best expounded in the Essays of Montaigne ; the moral and religious problems of the 17th century may be studied in the sermons of Bossuet ; modern man's psychological barriers are for the French more significantly analyzed by a Baudelaire or by a Proust than by a Freud. When we read such a passage as that of Valéry which begins with the words, Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles, we realize that the writer in France has replaced the prophet. The writer has learned, through the exercise of his form, which is the practice of lucidity, of stripping and condensing, how to see everything in its absolute meaning. Valéry in his passage on the mortality of civilization, and Péguy, another writer-prophet of France, when he speaks of the modern tendency of changing a mystical state into a political state, both attain in their writing to the absolute meaning of an event.

II

But this role of tradition in the make-up of the French literary mind is only one aspect. It gives to the writer a feeling of solidarity with the past and an urgency to continue a movement rather than to found a new one. This dependence of the French writer on earlier writers, which grows in many cases to

something akin to religious fervour, is not however an enslavement of mind, but, paradoxically, a liberation. Montaigne is better able to formulate his thoughts when he reads Seneca and Sextus Empiricus. Pascal, in denouncing Montaigne, found his own voice in the 17th century ; and Gide, today, in his approval of Montaigne and the pleasure he derives from reading the Essays, has received confirmation in many of his own attitudes as writer.

The French genius, however, cannot be defined solely by this habit of integration with the past. French genius is not just one thing. It is characterized by infinite variety and richness, by the most opposing traits. After establishing a relationship with the past, it then establishes another kind of relationship with the present. The second secret of the French literary mind is the dialogue it creates with another mind of its time. No major view on man, and no particular kind of sensitivity is allowed to exist alone in France for very long. The French genius asserts itself by creating some miracle of equilibrium. It discovers in its own age an opposing voice, usually of power equal to its own, and therefore is able to grow more vibrantly according to its own distinctive qualities. French art seems to develop in the form of a dialogue. But this dialogue is conciliation, or rather balance and counterpoint. Each of the two voices remains independent and clear, but much of its clarity and independence is derived from the existence of the other voice.

The provinces of France, each one so different from all the others, prefigure and control to some degree the multiple varieties or variations of French art. Long before the classical opposition of Corneille and Racine, so minutely studied in the lycées, there existed at the very beginnings of France in the 12th century, one of the most dramatic dialogues between French minds. Throughout the history of France, Brittany has produced literary minds which seems to be characterized by agility and suppleness on the one hand, and by a tendency toward mysticism and poetry on the other. Pierre Abélard, the 12th century philoso-

pher, who was also poet and lover at one time in his life, had this kind of mind: both critical and mystical, both lyric and independent. He is usually considered one of the forerunners of the French analytical and rationalist spirit, adept in argumentation and subtlety. But Abélard's philosophy and theology were attacked by a contemporary, a man equally powerful but in a different way. Saint Bernard was Abélard's adversary. He was a Burgundian, of a race vastly unlike the Breton. The genius of the Burgundians is that of organizing, constructing, synthesizing. The Roman legionnaires had settled in Burgundy and had perhaps bequeathed some of their respect for authority and their sense of order and even their physical prowess. I understand that it is still believed that the best soldiers in France come from Burgundy.

A clash was inevitable between these two men. Abélard's spirit was critical, analytical and even destructive; whereas Bernard's spirit was bent upon protecting authority and tradition, eager to preserve and synthesize, and determined to use his full power in accomplishing those ends. So Bernard, the man of action, opposed Abélard, the reflective thinker. The passion of order and synthesis opposed the passion of thought and analysis. The same warning which Saint Bernard gave to Abélard in the 12th century has been spoken in our day by Valéry in the essay already quoted, *La Crise de l'Esprit*. Man's investigation and knowledge may grow to such an extent that they become dangerous for himself and for the world. That was why Saint Bernard intervened in the career of Abélard, and that is the reason today for Valéry's question about knowledge. A vast amount of knowledge was necessary to permit the Americans to kill in the space of a few seconds 40,000 Japanese. We can easily realize the threat which such knowledge represents for civilization. It is not exaggerated to say that today a civilization appears to us as fragile as a human life.

The 12th century dialogue of Abélard and Bernard, which was a pattern of counterpoint established between a spirit of ana-

lysis and a spirit of synthesis, continues in varying ways in each great period of French history. In the Renaissance, the humanism of a Rabelais who believed in the natural goodness of man, was offset by the humanism of a Calvin, who preached the corruption of human nature. In the 17th century, one of the most significant dialogues for the subsequent development of French writing, was that between Descartes and Pascal. Descartes furthered his so-called method of doubt so that human reason might attain to truth. It would not be fantastic to consider Descartes' philosophical treatise, *Discourse on Method*, the first of the psychological novels in French literature wherein reason in its purest state is the protagonist. But Pascal, in the same years, and in no uncertain terms, was asking reason to humble itself: *Raison, humiliez-vous*: and telling mankind that "the heart has its reasons which reason doesn't understand." Thus the intellectual enterprise or adventure of Descartes cannot be separated from the more deeply tormented and spiritual adventure of Pascal. One was necessary for the other in this persistent pattern of French thought where each age seeks to conciliate opposite tendencies, where analysis is opposed to synthesis, realism to idealism, action to contemplation, thought to sentiment.

More than other countries, France favours and supports and values the existence of opposing minds at any given moment of its history. In that country which has developed to such a high degree the art of argument and discussion and conversation, no single voice is ever allowed to be heard for any length of time. I suppose that no teacher ever had such abundant and even hysterical success as Abélard did, and yet his revolutionary spirit, brilliant as it was, negative and demolishing according to that form which holds and stimulates young students, was not unchallenged and was finally subjugated by the sterner, more dogmatic, although far less subtle and scintillating, spirit of Saint Bernard.

II

There exists throughout the history of French literature, from the earliest writings in the French language, the courtly romances, for example, of Chrétien de Troyes in the 12th century, up to the plays and novels of the existentialists in Paris today, a profound and persistent unity of inspiration. What unites all the major works of French literature is the psychological inquest of man, an inquest to which each one seems dedicated.

The effort to study man, to explore the secrets of his mind and his desires, to define his position with respect to life and death, to the cosmos and to truth, is the motivation and the activity of the French literary mind. Many answers have been given to these questions in the various periods of French history, but all the questions might be summarized by the one question : what is man ? And this question provides the stimulation and subject matter of French writing, whether it be the ballades of the gangster-poet Villon in the 15th century or the involved psychological novel of Proust in the 20th century. The French writer turns instinctively not to the collective problems of mankind, but to the personal, more secretive and individual problems of a man. He believes that only through the laborious exploration of self can he attain to any aspect of universal truth.

In the so-called central period of French culture, in the classical age of the 17th century, there occurred an exceptional harmonization between this permanent interest of the French writer in psychological study and the philosophically Christian view of man which lies at the basis of everything we call French. The study of man became, at the time, more uniquely than it had previously, the study of man's corruption. Classicism and Christianity were united by the doctrine that man is not born good. The mystery which man brings to the world is not his innocence, but his knowledge of evil, his corruptibility. The experience of evil is the subject matter of the tragedies of Racine,

the maxims of La Rochefoucauld, the *fables de La Fontaine* and of every other literary work of the classical age.

The very method itself of Descartes, which ^{was} expounded in France as well as in Holland and elsewhere in Europe just prior to the reign of Louis XIV, consists in a descent into one's own mind and a removal from one's mind of all those notions falsely acquired which cannot be arrived at by rational intuition. We have already mentioned Descartes' *Discourse on Method* as a kind of introduction to the impressive list of psychological novels, the type of writing which, since the tragedies of Racine, has dominated French literature. Descartes' celebrated Cogito, ergo sum is the axiom on which he built his metaphysical system. It is the point of departure in a revolution not so much of ideas as of a method which has had a long history and which is not yet terminated.

Pascal, contemporary with Descartes, initiated a further revolution, which has had an equally fertile history. Descartes' analysis of the basic simple truths which man discovers in himself by means of his rational intuition is paralleled in time by Pascal's revolution of the human heart and of sentiment. The logic of Descartes, which is always however that of a single hero, is offset by the turbulent dark poetry of Pascal's torment. The "abyss" which he bears within himself, is Pascal's symbol of the barrier which separates him from truth and helps to objectify the personal anguish generated by his self-inquisition.

The psychological inquiry which has been carried on interruptedly by French literary mind since Descartes and Pascal, continues in varying proportions the influence or the example of these two men. On the one hand, the spirit of a method may be primary. This becomes equivalent almost to a cult of ordering and organization, of evidence, analysis and synthesis where structure and compositional form are uppermost in the mind of the creative artist. Flaubert would be a leading example of this type of writer. And then, on the other hand, a spirit of disquietude and even of anguish, manifesting itself in the lineage of

Pascal, where the study of man is carried on in an austere trembling and fearfulness, where the complexities of the heart overbalance the logical reasonableness of the mind. Some of the greatest artists belong to this: Racine, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mauriac, Malraux. To them I would attach the contemporary group of French writers known as the existentialists.

Since 1944, the existentialist movement has occupied a central position in French literary life. I refer to it in this general discussion of the French literary mind because of its own significance and value and because, as the most recent expression of French thought, it recapitulates and illustrates much of what we have already said.

Like everything new, existentialism has become a vogue. It has been examined by philosophers and journalists, and it has been distorted by both. Even here in America, existentialism has had a kind of vogue. The leading existentialist, M. Jean-Paul Sartre, has visited America two or three times. His picture has appeared in *Life Magazine* and *The New Yorker*. More serious critical articles have appeared in *Horizon* of London, *Partisan Review* and *Kenyon Review*. Translations of the novels and plays have begun to appear. *No Exit* and *The Flies* by Sartre have been produced in several American theatres.

In Paris, the vogue has been infinitely more pronounced. In fact, at times it has been hysterical. It has obsessed every type of French mind. Especially the mind of women, perhaps. But it is always women who assure the success of any book and any literary movement. But also, professors of Sorbonne are becoming interested in existentialism, and I am confident that the nimble-witted waiters in the Paris cafés and bistros have contributed to the popularization of the new writing.

One of the latest reports to reach me says that a young Dominican father has been lecturing on Sartre's 722-page book on existentialist philosophy, called *l'Etre et le Néant* (1943), as seriously as, thoroughly as if he were analyzing the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. The report continues to say

that the Dominican's public is composed of respectable ladies and innocent young girls who take voluminous notes. I keep wondering what the priest will do with the final sentence of this long work of Sartre when he comes to it. It is a very brief sentence which seemingly summarizes the book and in which Sartre gives his existentialist definition of man. The sentence is simply this : "Man is a useless passion". (*L'homme est une passion inutile*).

The most constant criticism levelled at existentialists is the obscenity used in many of their books and the tendency to deal with the dissolute or degrading aspects of human nature. Sartre was recently told about a woman who, in a polite conversation, by mistake, uttered a coarse word and excused herself by saying : "I believe I am becoming an existentialist."

For the particular purpose of our subject, existentialism illustrates all the permanent traits of the French literary mind, such as they appear to us. But especially in the close fervent exploration of psychological man. In Sartre's play, *No Exit*, he forces each of the three characters to turn inwardly upon himself and to reveal to the other two his most personal secrets and motives. The first part of the play is a reduction to zero of pretence and deceit and even imagination on the part of the three characters. It is an effort to begin all over again from the most basic and simple truths concerning three case histories. This is in a way an application of what is usually called the Cartesian method, which is the most lucidly rational approach to any given problem. But this is only the beginning of the play. The three characters find themselves in hell, which appears to them in the form of a Second Empire living room, and here we come upon the Pascalian aspect of the play. The room is hell for the three characters because they are not free to escape from it. It is what Pascal called the "abyss" or the obstacle in one's nature which prevents happiness.

This play of Sartre's contains therefore two subjects which we associate especially with French literature. First, the logic

of an analysis or an inquisition which may be called the Cartesian influence ; and secondly, the problem of man's happiness or salvation, which may be called the Pascalian influence. Cartesian and Pascalian are two adjectives which designate method and problem, and their commingling in the writings of Descartes and Pascal themselves, as well as in subsequent writers like Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Sartre, is the specifically French quality and paradox in literary art.

We use the word "paradox", or we might have used "irony", because of the extreme logicality and sense of order with which the French artist approaches the problems of the most dizzying illogicality. The towering disproportion between man's desire (idealism or thirst or aspiration) and man's capacity (realism or limitation or existence) is the subject matter of literature, and the French consider it with a disarming clarity of vision and a mathematical preciseness, whether the work be the 17th century *Méditations* of Descartes or the 20th century treatise on *l'Etre et le Néant* of Sartre.

Existentialism, as the newest expression of the French paradox, takes its point of departure from a fundamental axiom, "Existence precedes essence", as fundamental as Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum*. Sartre has often repeated that man exists first and then defines himself later. Man is only what he makes himself into. He projects himself into his future. Immediately with such statements, Sartre defines doctrines on human liberty and responsibility which are strongly reminiscent of Pascal's. If the key words used by the existentialists in describing man's state, despair, abandonment, anguish, nausea, have their counterpart in Pascal's vocabulary, Descartes' sentence about man conquering himself rather than the world (*se vaincre plutot soi-même que le monde*) is likewise applicable to Sartre's belief that man is the ensemble of his actions and that every human project has a universal value.

Existentialism has its roots in the past. Its writers have established a debate or a dialogue with other contemporary

writers. And it has revised all the basic metaphysical and psychological problems of man : action, liberty, responsibility.

IV

The outstanding trait of the French genius, that on which all other traits depend, is its spirituality. I believe that the equilibrium which the French writer establishes between himself and the historical past, between himself and his contemporary world, and between himself and the problem of man, is due to an exceptional power of spiritual discernment. It is a willingness to avow and unmask the spiritual turmoil and aspiration of man. More than a willingness, it is a habit, centuries old, of considering virtue common sense, of considering intuition that faculty by which one attains truth. Literature in France has had an incomparable tradition in its awareness of a spiritual mission. No matter what the subject matter be, and no matter what the philosophical stand of the individual writer be, the most apparent word in his vocabulary and I dare say the most frequently used word in French literature, is esprit and its derivatives : spirituel and spiritualité. No matter what kind of writer is speaking on human destiny, a Villon or a Pascal or an existentialist, the mystery of the subject is best articulated by the word itself of spirituality.

Everything that can be designated by the world as essentially French seems to come from their understanding of the individual, of their prized concept, *la personne*. For the French, to comprehend the destiny of their country is to comprehend the destiny of man. France is the vocation and the study of the individual.

Throughout their history, the French have never ceased believing in what we might call the "absolute of man." I mean the absolute which exists in each man and which can be attained only through perpetual analysis of himself and struggle with himself. This belief in the absolute of man is what might be designated as French pride, vastly different from the humanis-

tic pride of the Renaissance, when man was glorified sensuously by painters and poets, and vastly different from the racial pride of a culture myth. French pride has its roots in a profoundly pessimistic view of man : he has lost through greed and perversity a great heritage of peace which has to be won back by relentless struggle and purification.

This is the key to French writing in every century : in the poetry of Villon, in the story of Rabelais' giants, in the thoughts of Pascal, in the novels of André Malraux. French pride comes from this extraordinary awareness of man's imperfection and a courageous measuring of his dilemma. André Gide has summarized this in one of his sentences : *Je n'aime pas l'homme, j'aime ce qui le dévore* ("I don't like man, I like what devours him"). But to this very special form of pessimism is added a particular kind of optimism : a belief in the dignity of this struggle, in the ultimate capacity for reform in man and society. Behind every limpid portrait of man which French civilization has produced, behind every Gothic representation of Judas, behind every character of Balzac, behind every clown of Rouault rises the archetype of human greatness. France has given to the meaning of freedom the will to bind oneself to the ideal through a fierce embracing of what is actual and real and even debased in man.

I suppose that no nation in the world is so diverse as France, so divided, so made up of contradictory individuals. France to the outside world often resembles a multiplicity of political parties of social classes, of beliefs and ideas. But especially, at those very moments in its history when France appears to us the most divided, it appears to each Frenchman as one and unified. At the moments of greatest fever when France seems split asunder, it is then that she is magically composing past and future, fusing them, unifying, uniting and resolving. Its literary mind never allows France to lose its conscience.

Literature is the deepest memory of the world. In France, in particular, literature is the most powerful reassembling force

of conscience. It is true that dogmas, philosophies and ideals will appear contradictory in France, and in any other country for that matter. But if these contradictions, which are the product of the mind, become also the product of the literary mind and are cast into a formalized product, the artistic work they have the chance of becoming a stabilizing factor in periods of turmoil and crisis. Literature is a vast register of everything : myths, psychology, philosophy, theology ; but it is a reality, because of its form, which helps us to bear and understand that nightmare, infinitely more chaotic and contradictory, which is life.

France has recently passed through a military crisis and is now engaged in an economic crisis. But there is a third kind, which implacably follows the other two, and which is the most subtle and significant of all ; the intellectual or spiritual crisis. Here, on the third crisis, the focus and strength of literature are felt. At the beginning of this essay, I referred to the example of Paul Valéry and his lecture, *La Crise de l'Esprit*, written at the close of the first World War. At that moment of depletion, France was able to turn to one of her literary minds in order to see more clearly into the problems facing her. Valéry belongs to no recognizable group of writers, such as Communists or Catholics or Existentialists. He is, therefore, as Gide is, a more purely literary figure, disinterested and supremely independent.

His death coincided with the end of the war, and again, as in 1919, France turned toward him as clarifier of contradictions. The long creative effort of Valéry's life was directed toward a study of the activity of man's spirit or of man's mind. The word *esprit* in French means both spirit and mind, and surely it is one of the most frequently used words in Valéry's texts. In one of his earliest writings, published before the end of the 19th century, Valéry asked the question, "What are the powers of a man ?" (*Que peut un homme ?*) and on the pages he was writing at the time of his death in 1945, he was asking the same question.

He never deviated from the most central problem of man,

from a consideration of the deepest part of man's being, of what he called *le moi pur* ("the pure self"). Valéry's enterprise of fifty years, twenty of which were spent in total literary silence—an admirable lesson of rigour and severity toward oneself—was an enterprise of denuding the intellect, of stripping off false notions and percepts and prejudices from the mind. The activity of the mind consists for Valéry of two parts: transformation and conservation. By these two activities the present and the past are harmonized.

This enterprise of a literary mind, which is spiritual in its deepest sense, stimulates the demon of knowledge who always represents a grave danger for spiritual man, but Valéry pursued his adventure with an admirable French balance of wit and seriousness, of science and maliciousness, of incredulity and naiveté. There was always in him a trace of the young student's mind: brilliant and supple, affectionate and destructive. He liked to demolish traditions and then walk about joyfully in the debris. He used to call the devil "a very attractive literary character." But levity was always offset by seriousness. Valéry composed out of the problem of knowledge a work in prose and a work in poetry where light is juxtaposed with nocturnal shadows. The experience of being human for Valéry is, in its spiritual sense, equivalent to feeling that "there is something from all men in each one of us and something from each one of us in all men" (*Il y a de tous dans chacun et de chacun dans tous*).

The most constant theme in the writings of Valéry he learned from the example and the methods of Leonardo. It is a theme which, more than other literary themes, defines and limits the work of the artist and emphasizes the primacy of the spirit in the activity of the artist. An artistic work, according to this doctrine, is never terminated. It is abandoned. A poem or a painting, therefore, represents a fragment of some greater exercise or adventure carried on not within the realm of matter but within the realm of the spirit.*

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ART-PERSPECTIVE*

By NANDALAL BOSE

IN OLDER TIMES it was after much tedious labour that the student had first to be grounded in grammar ; it was only then that he earned his right to poetry and rhetoric. In other words, it was labour first, pleasure afterwards. But now we have arranged for the simultaneous study of poetry and grammar. In our days it is joy first and effort afterwards. Indeed it is the joy that will provide the incentive for work.

Why is it that artistic creation needs such an amount of effort ? Well, generally there is a veil as it were before our minds ; unless that is removed one cannot see an object truly, and till one can do that one cannot really paint. Thanks to their long love and discipline some men of genius reach a state of mind when whatever the object they look at, the veil gives way ; some vivid aspect or other of the object stands revealed before their inner eye. So, for them, aesthetic creation is no longer a thing of effort. It will be the same with us. All that is needed is love and constant application.

For hours the student has been standing by the roadside with the object of meditation before him : bead-like fruits hanging from leafless branches of a *mahaneem* tree in clusters of gold.

This tree that you are adoring and trying to paint today, if somehow you can come to love it, it will be yours for ever. Maybe some day you will suffer deeply, lose your near and

* Translated by Sisirkumar Ghose from the original Bengali article *শিল্পদর্শি* (*Silpadṛṣṭi*) being a record of conversations with student at different times, taken down by Kanai Samanta.

dear ones, and life appear empty and bereft of solace. Then from the roadside this tree will whisper to you : Here I am. And that will be a consolation. It is an immortal gift for you, not for this life alone, but for lives to come.

The following was explained to a student who had been asked to draw a *banapulaka* tree.

You first look at this tree for some time. Go and sit near it, —morning, midday, afternoon, evening, and again in the middle watches of the night. After sitting for a while you will perhaps feel bored. It will seem to you as if even the tree is speaking to you in an annoyed tone : What are you doing here ? Off you go. Go, I tell you. Then you will have to placate and plead with it. You will have to tell it : Such are the orders of my guru, I cannot possibly ignore them ; so please don't be angry with me. Oh, for heaven's sake, be a little more generous, reveal to me your true form. In this way after a few days of silent sadhana, when you feel that you have really looked at the tree, go back to your room and shut yourself in and then paint it.

You must begin by loving something about the tree ; then alone can you see it, then will your vision gradually fulfil itself. The way of art is nothing but the way of loving things. But, this initial love is a gift from the gods ; he who has this gift is already an artist : how can others teach you to love ? Abanibabu used to say that the guru does not create the artist, the student comes to the artist. It is like tending a young plant with light, air and water, so that it may grow : but who will create the plant ? It is out of long contact that liking for a place or a thing slowly develops. This love or liking is due to a realisation of some relationship. You probably notice how superbly the *banapulaka* stands poised under the sky ; in that moment of sudden vision you have loved it. Or you find it blossoming into flowers, and you fall in love with it. Before long the flowers wither and drop down ; even that may appeal to you. An object in itself does not move the mind, there must be some particular reason or relation.

You may like it because of its shape and structure, the colour and rhythm of its leaves that delight the mind.

A paper rose is what it is, for ever, without change ; how long may one like it ? The living rose, on the other hand, is ever on the move, establishing ever new relations with the wider universe. The rhythm of that wider movement is its life. Once you have gained an insight into that multiform life it is a joy for ever. That is why the love of the artist abides for ever.

Of course, under special circumstances a paper rose too has its appeal, by reason of particular associations. Then it also becomes an object of art.

The main thing is that you must love your object. Let that love possess your mind and heart. Then it will be there of itself on the tip of your brush and the result will be a real picture. This is the greatest as it is the subtlest secret of the art of painting as of all art. If your mind does not respond in gladness to your surroundings, if you do not love them, and if your love does not grow from day to day, if your work does not proceed solely from that inspiration, it is useless to try to master technique. At one time I had taken a fancy for playing the *esraj*. I practised the scales regularly and even learnt some of the scores. But as soon as I stopped playing, it did not take me even six days to forget six months' lessons. The reason was that I had learnt 'by rote' the grammar of music and did not enter into its spirit.

Love is necessary and patience as well. One must reach the goal. The practice of art is indeed a *sadhana*, it is not an idle pastime.

Training must be continuous and experiments endless. Avoid fear or self-indulgence, or the desire to make an effect. The artist should try to express the little that he has really experienced.

THE QUATRAINS OF SARMAD SHAHID

By F. M. ASIRI

Sarmad, expect not love from the people of this world :
A tree without foliage is no shelter against the sun.
Honour lies with contentment and disgrace with greed ;
Live with honour and seek not to live in disgrace.

— Sarmad.

Sarmad¹, an eminent sufi of Kashan (Persia), who met with his ghastly end at Delhi in A. H. 1071 (A. D. 1660) for his heretical views in regard to religion, was a man of great parts, distinguished for his proficiency in literature, philosophy and science. He was endowed by nature with all the gifts essential for a first-rate poet. For giving literary expression to his thoughts he had attained mastery over the two important languages of the time, viz., Persian and Arabic.

1 A note on Sarmad Shahid has already been published in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. XII (1947) No 4.

Sarmad was born at Kashan in a family of Armenian Jews. He studied literature and philosophy under Mulla Sadra and Abul Qasim Fidareki and embraced Islam. He came to India as a merchant in 1042 (1632 A. D.) ; but his meeting with Abhay Chand at Tattha changed the whole course of his life. He gave away everything he had with him and became a Yogi.

Sarmad came to Lahore in 1044 (1634) with his disciple and Mutamad Khan the author of *Iqbal Namah Jahangiri* met him there. Mutamad found him "stark naked covered with crisp hair and long nails in his fingers. He spoke too much and recited quatrains."

Sarmad was in Hyderabad (Deccan) in 1057 (1646) where he was much respected by the king and his prime minister. He came to Delhi sometime before the war of succession started among the sons of Shah Jahan. There at the capital he enjoyed favours of the king and was a prominent member of the mystic assembly of Dara Shikuh's court. After Aurangazeb's ascension to the throne and Dara's defeat and death, Sarmad was beheaded in 1071 A. H. (1660) for his blasphemy. (For further details see *Majmaul Afkar*, *Dabistan*, *Miratul Khayal* and other biographical works).

Sarmad wrote in every form of Persian poetry viz. gazal, rubai, qita etc. and it is believed he was quite prolific in his poetical output. He wrote much during his youth, most of which was excellent erotic poetry, of which he says :

Now old as I am it's difficult for me to write verses,
What I had to write has been written in my youth.

And again,

In youth indulgence in lyrical poetry is an art ;
Love for rose, the saki and the bottle is a virtue.

But unfortunately out of all of his works nothing except a gazal, some quatrains and a number of stray verses have survived the ravages of time. Whether he compiled any *divan* (anthology) of his gazals of youth, written after the style of Hafiz², is not known to us. With only one gazal in hand we are not in a position to form an opinion about Sarmad's efficiency and capacity in this particular form of verse. To copy or compete with Hafiz is by itself a presumption and an audacity, and I wonder if Sarmad had fared well in his attempt. The gazal and other stray verses (which also appear to be parts of defunct gazals), are no match to any gazal of Hafiz. The arrangement of the words suggests artificiality and the ideas are insipid, rotten and out-worn. Their loose and rank versification and forcible tagging of incoherent couplets is a great reflection on the master-writer of quatrains.

It is only the quatrains (rubais) that are the mainstay of Sarmad's name and fame as a poet. His quatrains which give him lustre enough to shine in the constellation of eminent poets of the seventeenth century, provide any one with sufficient material to estimate his importance as a poet and a teacher of mystical doctrines.

Sarmad admits this in a quatrain :

With the ideas and thoughts of others I have no concern
Though in the style of gazal I am a follower of Hafiz.
As for quatrains, I am a disciple of Khayyam
But I have tasted little of the wine he offered.

THE MAIN THEME OF SARMAD'S QUATRAINS⁸

Rubai is the form of verse adopted by the sufis for the expression of their mystical experiences in metaphorical language. Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr (obt. A. D. 1049)⁴ was the first who helped to bring this peculiar diction and symbolism of mysticism in vogue and embodied them in his quatrains. After Abu Sa'id every sufi poet adopted the quatrain as the vehicle of his thought which mainly centred on pantheism, self-negation, quietism etc. Sarmad too went along that way.

Sarmad was a sufi in the real sense of the term, belonging to the universal order of the pantheists. He had no attachment to or predilection for, any order then in vogue, such as Chistia, Qadria, (which Sarmad's patron and friend, Dara Shikuh, professed), or Naqshbandia. Like other pantheists he believed the creator and the creation to be one and the same and the worship of anything in his opinion was not objectionable. For instance he says :

I know not if in this spherical old monastery
Abhay Chand is my God or some one else.

And again

In one place He takes the form of black-stone⁵
And in the other He becomes the idol of a Hindu.

"To Sarmad *The One* is the only real existence deeply infused in all matter and in all the forces of the universe and in the mind of man."

God is *all* and is manifest in all things but none can perceive Him with the ordinary human eye. For it a special power

⁸ Rubai or quatrain is an independent stanza consisting of four lines of equal though varied prosody, sometimes all rhyming, but oftener the third line suspending the cadence by which the last atones with the first two. (A A B A)

⁴ For the life of Abu Sa'id see Nicholson : *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*.

⁵ Black-stone or Sang-i-Aswad of Ka'aba which the pilgrims kiss or touch at the time of pilgrimage. The stone is believed to have come down from heaven at the time of the construction of Ka'aba by Abraham.

To pine for wealth and high positions is bad,
 To entertain such stupid wishes is bad.
 In thy body's house the soul is not to stay for long ;
 To have high hopes for this short life is bad.

And he says :

Seekers after the world lack all comforts ;
 Perpetually they are wedded to their lust for gold.
 These people seldom think of their approaching end ;
 So lost are they in longing for wealth.

Sarmad advises the sinners not to be swayed by pessimism in regard to God's forgiveness. God's mercy, he says, is far greater than the sins of all the human beings put together.

Besides the painful repetition of ideas, above enumerated, Sarmad wrote also on different topics concerned mainly with the outcome of his varied emotions and moods. He recited rubais extempore in his conscious and unconscious state. In the former state he, well aware of his smallness in comparison to the vastness and magnitude of the universe, appears to be quite pessimistic in tone :—

The things that are of no avail—we are.
 The trees which bear no fruit—we are.
 We have weighed ourselves well in the scales ;
 The atoms which are of no account—we are.

But in his unconscious state he finds himself like the drop mingling with the ocean, as one with the entire creation. He forgets his insignificant stature and regards himself as the king of kings : .

I am the king of kings, O ascetic, and not naked like thee ;
 All distracted but gracefully composed.

STYLE AND DICTION OF SARMAD'S QUATRAINS

Sarmad possessed the talents to express the most difficult ideas in the briefest possible manner and his Jewish niggardliness in regard to the use of words is manifest in each of his lines.

He avoids as far as possible the use of uncommon allusions, far-fetched similes and metaphors and jarring words and phrases. For instance he says :—

Unless thou annihilatest thyself, thou wilt not get life ;
 This great position is not given to one with mean courage ;
 Unless thou burnest thyself out and out like a candle,
 The thread of light will not be granted thee.

And again :

Thank God the beloved has been so kind to me ;
 I perceive His bountiful showers upon me.
 'The tree that is set bears fruit at last,'
 I plucked a rose from the garden of love.

Simplicity and novelty in the expression of the common and worn-out thoughts and ideas are the main features which strike every reader of Sarmad's poetry. His verses are free from unnatural adornments, and poetic licences and therefore can be understood by the man in the street.

According to the critics of Persian poetry the best verse is that which can be rendered into prose with the least change of the order or sequence of words. This is quite conspicuous in the rubais of Sarmad. For instance he says :

An kas kih sharáb mikhurad miguzrad
 Wan kas kib kabáb mikhurad miguzrad
 Sarmad kih ba kásai gadái nán rá
 Tar kardá ba ab mikhurad miguzrad.⁶

This is one of the most popular quatrains of Sarmad. Besides that it contains all the charms and melody to place it among the best, it can be read both as a prose and poetry. The quatrain, so to say, presents an excellent example of Sarmad's simplicity, originality and natural flow of ideas and befitting

6 One drinks wine and passes on,
 One eats kabab and passes on ;
 But Sarmad only dips his dry bread
 In water of his ewer, eats, and passes on.

words. With the exception of only a few quatrains, which however are of doubtful origin, all possess the same flow and can be read both ways ; and one can hardly perceive a tinge of *áwurd* (forced or un-inspired composition) in any of them. One more example will not be quite out of place here :

Sarmad gila ikhtisár mibáyad kard
 Yak kar azin du kár mibáyad kard
 Ya tan barazái dust mibáyad dád,
 Ya ján hafidái yár mibáyad kard.⁷

Dry as the subject of mysticism is, and considering the state of mind Sarmad was in, one can hardly expect light-hearted remarks from him. But anyway his quatrains are not totally barren of the wholesome touch of wit and humour. For instance, explaining his belief in predestination and helplessness of man, Sarmad says :

Sarmad is a body with the soul in an other hand,
 He is an arrow with the bow in an other hand.
 He wished to be man and thereby to get freedom
 But he became a cow with the rope in an other hand.

Also Sarmad's sarcastic remark against Mulla Qavi who later on sentenced him to death is very well known. In his remark "Iblis Qavi ast" he has used the word Qavi in two senses : i. e. Qavi is Satan—the most condemned creature, and Qavi is also Satan-- the all-powerful.⁸

7 Sarmad, cut short thy complaints against the beloved
 And do one thing out of those two :
 Either surrender thy body to the will of thy friend
 Or sacrifice thy soul at the altar of *Love*.

8 Sarmad's nudity and his free and unconventional pronuncements against the stiff orthodoxy had become a constant headache for the higher officials of the court of Aurangzeb. At the instance of the king, Mulla Qavi who looked more concerned than others at Sarmad's state of affairs asked the saint "Uryan chira mibashi ? (why do you remain naked ?). Sarmad replied without a little hesitation, "Iblis Qavi ast (because Qavi who is a devil has overpowered me). This sentence can be interpreted also as the devil is very powerful.—*Ma'arif*, May and June, 1946.

SARMAD AND UMAR KHAYYAM

Khayyam is now probably the best-known Persian poet in the world. This is not because he wrote excellent poetry in a charming style. Not at all.

In his own country, Khayyam has always been regarded as a second-rate poet, for his verse in its beauty has been surpassed by many other poets and his epicureanism is not quite up to the taste of the eastern mind. Khayyam's present-day fame is mainly due to the appreciation of his poetry by the West.⁹

But Sarmad, on the other hand, still remains behind the veil of obscurity and oblivion, although among his contemporaries he was regarded as the greatest rubai writer. The reason is that he has so far failed to find a Fitzgerald to introduce him to the modern age.

The relation between Sarmad and Khayyam is that of a disciple to a preceptor, which the former has admitted in a quatrain. Sarmad says that he has copied the style of Khayyam but has refrained from taking up the views of the latter. Obviously, Sarmad has stated thus only out of respect; otherwise Sarmad's style is not the true copy of Khayyam, nor have his views in certain respects differed from those of the latter. Sarmad writes for others as a teacher and Khayyam only for himself and his poetry is only the outcome of his leisure hours. In his style Khayyam is audacious, presumptuous and affronts, and moves on undaunted by, the stiff rules of poetry and mysticism. He argues like a philosopher which he actually was, giving examples and deducing morals therefrom. But Sarmad is as cautious, serene

9. Prof. Browne estimates Khayyam as a second-rate poet, an opinion that is held by the Persian critics themselves. Prof. Browne says: "Umar Khayyam who is not ranked by the Persians as a poet even of the second-rate, is better known in Europe and America than any of his countrymen. In Persia his fame is due to his mathematical and astronomical rather than poetical achievements." For further details see Browne: *History of Persian Literature*, Vol. II.

and modest in his expression as a true mystic and a preacher alone could be. We find little of Khayyam's outspokenness in his quatrains.

Sarmad's views in regard to the instability of the world, predestination, inutility of worldly pursuits, hatred of hypocrisy and so-called orthodoxy, are identical with those of Khayyam. It is only in offering suggestions for life's pursuits that Sarmad parts company with him. Khayyam believes that life is very short ; so it should be enjoyed as much as is possible. But Sarmad regards this life merely as a sojourn for collecting provision for the life-after-death ; so it would be stupid on the part of any one to waste it in pleasures. The best provision for the next life according to Sarmad is to seek union with the Absolute Being.

TRANSLATION OF THE QUATRAINS

The translation of a master-piece into a foreign tongue is an effrontery, as it invariably misses the charm of the original. Notwithstanding the conscientious zeal and meticulous care on the part of the translator, much of its effective force is lost in the translation. This is more true in the case of poetry. A poet himself knows how to express his delicate and sublime ideas in the best manner and for it he uses the only appropriate words and phrases and the slightest change in the arrangement would result in tarnishing the beauty of the whole line. For instance, Tagore's songs, which are proverbial for their charm and melody, appear sometimes uncouth and unpleasing when rendered into a foreign tongue.

The same is exactly the case with the poems of Sarmad. He uses his own language for the expression of his special ideas and both of them (language and ideas) are so intermingled that it is difficult to separate one from the other. While reading his verses one feels a regular thrill, as in a transport of ecstasy. But that can scarcely be experienced while perusing a translation of them. Nevertheless, since there is no other way to make the

message of a mystic universal, the translation has got to be resorted to.

In the present case, beside the mere translation of the qatrains of Sarmad we have other hurdles also to cross. None of the important libraries of India and Pakistan (even of Europe) has a manuscript copy of Sarmad's works. The lithographed edition of some of Sarmad's rubais is so badly done that most of the lines in it have become quite unintelligible. Besides, it does not contain some of the popular rubais given in many of the biographical works like *Kalimatsh-Shuara*, *Dabistan*, *Miratul Khayal* etc. The copyist of the lithographed edition, besides putting in the well-known rubais of Khayyam and Abu Sa'id, has left out and added words as he liked.

However, I have utilised all the available sources for the correction and collection of the rubais and other stray verses of Sarmad and have left out in the translation, as far as I could, the rubais commonly ascribed to others.

RUBAYAT-I-SARMAD SHAHID

The translation is based on the edition of the rubaiyat of Sarmad lithographed in Delhi in 1905. The rubais are arranged according to the alphabetical order of the radif¹⁰ in the Persian text. The rubais collected from various other sources have been put at their proper places. The translation is strictly literal ; but the real sense however has not been allowed to suffer.

In the name of God, the Kind and Compassionate.

1

Thy mercy, O God, has outweighed my sins ;
That is why I sinned more and more.

My sins though numerous, thy mercy is boundless ;
I saw this everywhere and experienced it too.

10 Radif : The last letter of the line which remains the same throughout the poems.

2

I made worldly affairs of others so smooth ;
 I relieved men of their sorrows and pains ;
 But I failed to find the just and faithful in them,
 Though I met all and tried them one by one.

3

In the waste-land of trial, O God, everywhere,
 I happened to meet all good and bad people ;
 But none except Thee came forward to help me,
 Though I met all and tried them one by one.

4

O Thou who exists in secret, be visible to the naked eye !
 I thought much over it where Thou couldst be !
 I want Thee to press hard in my arms ;
 How long wouldest Thou remain behind the veil ?

5

The men here boast over their religiosity and wealth,
 Relieve me of both as they are of no avail to me.
 Make me infatuated of Thee alone
 And come out of the veil and be my guide.

6

Thou hast distinguished Thyself in loveliness,
 In friendliness too Thou hast stood out above all.
 I greatly admire this special characteristic of Thee,
 That Thou art not visible, yet art visible everywhere.

7

All the good or bad that exists, I have seen it ;
 I've collected both thorns and flowers that bloom,
 I've recognised the worth of everything great or small ;
 I've tested them like gold on the touch-stone.

8

My heart sought Thy fragrance from the morning breeze
 My eyes searched for the flower-like face of Thee ;
 But I could get neither the one nor the other ;
 To imagination was left the guidance to Thy abode.

9

Thou hast made Thyself prominent in allurement,
 Also in the tact and art of friendship ;
 This bright eye of mine fixes its gaze on Thee,
 But every moment Thou appearest in hundred forms.

10

Every time thou canst not find traces of fickleness,
 The flower of love has the fragrance of faith too,
 Ne'er wilt thou understand thy nature and thy creation,
 Both of them lie in the hand of God, I 've told thee.

11

O God, forgive me my sins out of Thy mercy ;
 Accept kindly my wails of the dark night.
 Old as I am, the story of my sins is astonishing,
 Only Thy kindness can remove my difficulties.

12

The company of friends in a garden or a desert,
 Assembled to talk and to pass the cup,
 Disperses at last, and nothing is left except a story ;
 The goblet of heaven has caused their dispersal.

13

Check thyself, O heart, from false thoughts ;
 Abandon all stupid whims and undeveloped thoughts ;
 Be not happy over thy indulgence in the world,
 For neither the seeker nor the sought-after survives.

14

In this wilderness thou art hotly pursued by death ;
 There is the end of all of thine affairs.
 It begins with worries and ends in grief ;
 This wealth, ah ! is ever a cause for ruin.

15

Sweet Love sometimes is kind and other times cruel,
 He appears every moment in different guises.
 Open thy arms of 'insight' that He may come to thee.
 He ne'er goes even a step from thee away.

16

Thy mercy surpasses my sins ;
 Ever have I been taking account of myself.
 Although I'm lost in sins from head to foot,
 Yet are they not greater than Thy forgiveness.

17

I am ascetic though, yet deal I with my love alone.
 What business have I with rosary and sacred thread ?
 This woollen cloak which conceals hundreds of evils,
 I shall ne'er put it on, as I feel shame at it.

18

Pride here is considered as a great virtue,
 But real greatness is gained by vexations.
 Break in the organ is due to diversions,
 And turning stone into a collyrium needs just a glance.

19

A fine statured one has lowered my position
 And with the intoxicated eye has taken me out of my hand
 He's in my arms and I go in quest of Him ;
 A strange thief has stripped me of my garments.

20

From selfishness expect not any peace,
 With thy mean efforts desire not high positions,
 This hankering after the world yields little profit ;
 Accept the loss and hope not for any gain.

21

Life that is passed in vain pursuits,
 Nothing strange, it He forgives without taking account
 Why should He care about the ugliness of my deeds,
 Whose kindness ever excels His wrath ?

22

It's impossible to calculate Thy kindness and my sins
 Each one is incalculable like the bubbles of the ocean.
 The imagination of no one can fly as high as that ;
 How can one know the limits of a limitless thing ?

23

Sarmad, expect not love from the people of the world ;
 A tree without foliage is no shelter against the sun.
 Honour lies with contentment, and disgrace with greed,
 Live with honour and seek not to live in disgrace !

24

Seek rosy wine from the saki of Kauthar ;¹¹
 In old age and decrepitude look for the refreshing cup.
 How long wilt thou be a slave to the world ?
 With the help of God seek freedom from its snare !

25

O my atrocious self, an embodiment of despair !
 Without submission to Him thou wilt not enjoy bounties.
 Thy happiness lies only in being content with thy lot,
 As the world cannot be thine to the extent of thy hopes.

26

Sarmad is a body and his soul is in an other hand.
 He is an arrow with the bow in an other hand.
 He wished to be man and thereby to get freedom,
 But he became a cow with the rope in an other hand.

27

This woollen cloak which hides under it the thread of infidelity
 Is hypocrisy and fraud and a source of all evils.
 Put it not on that thou mayest not bear
 The burden of shame which is accompanied with grief.

28

The garden where roses take the form of bubbling cups
 Is the place to which my heart is attached.
 True, if you call me a reckless drinker,
 But wrong if you dub me a pious ascetic.

29

The lovers of this world who pine for gold muhars
 Are much too notorious for their mutual grudge.
 Be not afraid of the scorpions and the snakes ;
 But fear these men who are deadly and stinging !

11. Kauthar is a spring of some sweet liquid believed to exist in paradise.

30

I seek not the world as it is of little value ;
 Nor religion which, without the wealth of Thy look, is a
 bondage,
 I seek union with Thee, there lies the rub.
 One word suffices if thou liest in my heart.¹²

31

Drink wine, O ascetic, it's so palatable !
 Give up ascetism, it is a cloak for all evils.
 Lawful, undoubtedly, what thou callest *haram*,
 To one who gets its effect *All is God*.

32

In youth, indulgence in lyrical poetry is an art ;
 Love for roses, the saki, and the bottle is a virtue.
 But with old age to renounce the world
 And to think of the life after death is a virtue.

33

To pine for wealth and high positions is bad,
 To entertain such stupid wishes is bad.
 In thy body's house the soul is not to stay for long ;
 To have high hopes for this short life is bad.

34

This world is all full of greed and lust ;
 Wherever there is a heart it languishes in love for gold,
 The sick are many but very little is the syrup of dinar¹⁸ ;
 Ah ! this dilapidated inn is full of sufferers.

35

In love the trend of discourse is different.
 Grasp the sense of words--my account is different.
 I'm mad after the form and essence of everything ;
 So my thought is strange and my mode of thinking is different.

12. The line reads as 'yak harf has ast gar kas dar khana ast' Just a word from Him is enough (to fulfil the hopes of others) if any one is in the house (heart).

18. Syrup o' dinar : a medicine for curing fever. There is a pun on the word dinar which is also a gold coin.

36

A fool is he who gives up drinking wine ;
 A beast, yes, and not at all a human being.
 Wine stirs up fascinating pangs at love's separation,
 And rekindles fires long extinguished.

37

A man with much of greed never succeeds,
 A bird that goes in search of grain is ever trapped.
 This wealth always brings grief and worry ;
 The less of it the greater is the comfort.

38

A heart that is swayed by greedy wishes
 Never feels contented even if he gets an empire.
 This thread of life is pretty short, therefore
 Avoid long hopes, they are a snare and a cage !

39

He who only looks about the garden and passes on
 Collects nothing except thorns and faded flowers.
 This form of life is a reality ;
 Alas, for him who feels it not and passes on !

40

One lost in ambitions bears nothing except thorns and faded
 flowers.

His heart's ailment defies all remedies.
 A thirsty eye nothing in the world can satisfy,
 And this planet is crowded with thirsty eyes.

41

All comforts lie in a place where love abides,
 Without the grief of love none can find pleasure in life.
 Be not neglectful of love and the pure wine,
 If thou desirest wealth of Jamshid it lies with the cup,

42

It's virtuous to be helpful to any one ;
 It's a bargain which yields much of profit.
 Be not careless of this very rare commodity,
 As this stormy ocean of life is swiftly passing.

43

The flame that brightens up my ruby-like heart
 Takes the form of a pearl in the ocean and a spark in the stone ;
 It assails all, though it's perceived by few ;
 How simple appears this ambiguous thought.

44

Blessed is he who in this world
 Takes lesson from whatever he comes across ;
 Who abandons society for a solitary corner
 And remains unaffected by anything good or bad of the world.

45

How soon the pleasures and the sorrows of the world have passed !
 Anything you were afraid of has disappeared.
 This short period of life that is still your lot
 Should not be wasted away—take care of it !

46

Every good or bad that exists is in the hand of God ;
 This truth, apparent or hidden, can be witnessed anywhere.
 If thou believest it not, imagine then
 Wherefrom comes my weakness and satan's strength.

47

Sarmad has been immortalised on account of love,
 And the wine of love has made him senseless.
 By the sword-blow of the executioner he didn't come to self,
 And thereby he achieved the highest position of the prophet.

48

Every cyprus-statured thou comest across is not a friend ;
 Nor can a silver-skinned swindler be a friend ;
 Choose one as a friend who sacrifices all for thee !
 A friend really is he who helps thee at the time of need.

49

A wise heart encloses love in it ;
 An eye with a vision sees nothing but Him ;
 An ear with a power to listen hears only the truth ;
 And a tongue articulating, knows the secrets of every word.

50

Temples and mosques are not the only places where He lives,
But all the heavens and the earth are His abode.
The whole universe is simply enamoured of his Name !
Yes, wise is one who is lost unto Him.

51

God be thanked, my beloved is pleased with me !
He is kind all the time and showers bounties upon me.
No loss have I suffered from this love and affection ;
The bargain my heart struck is all profit.

52

Man needs just a piece of bread to satisfy him ;
Look, how his avarice keeps him weeping day and night !
What a storm rages in the ocean of existence !
While he is only for a moment, like a bubble, to last.

INDO-IRANIAN STUDIES

By J. C. TAVADIA

IN THE DOMAIN of Oriental research Indo-Iranian studies form a combined group officially ; but in reality they are seldom treated together. Both fields have widened so enormously that it is impossible to do justice to them jointly. Moreover, the centre of interest has shifted from related branches to remoter ones. Yet, it is essential that the comparative stand-point should not be set aside altogether. One must look beyond the other side of the Indus, especially as regards the older periods. This is done at least partially in western countries, where nobody thinks of taking up Avesta without a sufficient knowledge of Sanskrit, particularly of Vedic Sanskrit. But this does not mean that we should restrict ourselves to linguistic studies alone nor should it be a one way traffic from that side of the Indus. Specialists in both branches, Indology and Iranistic, can have mutual benefit, and that too not only in the restricted domain of linguistics but also in matters relating to literature, religion, philosophy and culture in general. In the following pages will be found some examples bearing on this point, particularly as to what Iranian literature can teach an Indologist.

Under the rubric Iranian literature falls also what is usually called Persian literature (plus the Arabic writings by Persians during the first centuries of Islam). What it can teach us is or can easily be known, for there exist proper means to get oneself acquainted with it. Of course, as regards this branch too there is room, and immense room to boot, for further and better knowledge through research, as well as for historical and critical method in its study. But that is a different matter. On this occasion I want to restrict myself to the older branches of

for one's community, if not for humanity at large, was not totally excluded. This is not a mere favourable or self-complimentary surmise but an actual fact.

A direct and unimpeachable proof is afforded in the very place where the 'work-soul' is referred to,—in that picturesque account of the soul's journey to the other world, Hadoxt Nask 2. Here in 13 f. the *daenā*, the work-soul, of a good person declares to his *urvan*, the choice-soul (from *var* 'to chose') : Whereas¹ thou sawest another setting fire, and practising *baosana* deed and deportation, and doing destruction to plants, yet¹ thou satest down reciting the Gathas, and adoring good (or bright?) waters and the fire of Ahura Mazdāh, and satisfying a 'holy' man coming from near or from afar. And thus thou madest me who was beloved more beloved, who was beautiful more beautiful, etc.—The last item about satisfying a 'holy' man refers to hospitality which one must offer to a member of the same faith,—a religious obligation which became a very prominent feature in Islam. In the translation of the evil deeds I follow Hertel ; tradition differs and Bartholomae leaves out all but the last. In any case, they refer to some worldly deeds injurious to economy, the opposite of which, the beneficial ones like agriculture must have been performed by the good man as declared in the *Vidēvdāt* 3.4.23. Thus the 'work-soul' did not consist of merely religious rites but also of deeds of practical utility for the benefit of all.

It may not be possible to adduce such evidence in the case of Yājñavalkya. But we know that in his days, as in the whole period of the *Upaniṣads*, the old faith in religious ceremonies as the only means to attain supreme bliss inculcated by the Brāhmaṇas was no longer in force ; and although the new trend of thought was mainly towards metaphysics, ethics too might have had some share in it. When Yājñavalkya speaks of the 'work-soul', we can safely assume such share and see in his teaching in Brh. Up. 2. 3. 13. the recognition of the great truth that one is what one does, one's very essence or soul is what one achieves.

By means of this interpretation arrived at by comparative study one does far better justice to the great teacher and thinker than by the usual application of the common *karma*-theory involving re-birth on earth. This theory is also a later indigenous growth not in consonance with the old Vedic views.

These few notes and remarks concerning the scope and importance of the comparative study of Indo-Iranian will also show the necessity of the proper cultivation of the Iranian branch, which is either totally neglected or poorly treated by the seats of learning and learned societies in India. This is however a different subject and need not be pursued here. It is enough to note that however little and fragmentary and in whatever shape the Iranian matter may have come down to us, it is of great value. The more one studies it, the better one appreciates it, as can be seen from the achievements of a few western scholars. The value of Iranian is very much enhanced by the discovery of a large number of manuscripts and other matter from the sand-buried ruins of Turfan and other places in Eastern or Chinese Turkistan in the beginning of the present century. Their ingenious decipherment brought to light a number of new dialects and languages of the Middle Iranian stage. But it is the language only that is Iranian ; the matter or contents are mostly Indian and sometimes also the script. For leaving aside some Manichean and Christian texts and fragments most of the Sogdian and all of the Saka or Khotanese manuscripts, those written in Brahmi, contain translations of Buddhist works on various subjects, religious as well as medical. Although only translations, they are likely to shed additional light on the matter. Indeed there is no lack of real work ; what we lack is real workers.

1 Thus to suit the context and because *yat* *ānt* have not always the temporal or conditional sense 'when then'.

THE WAR-POETRY OF LOUIS ARAGON

By PRAKASH CHANDRA GUPTA

ARAGON IS THE POET of French Resistance. He had written Dadaist and Sur-realist verse before the War, but it was during the dark days of German occupation that his poetic genius blossomed and flowered as never before. Apart from the urge for self-expression, there was the stark necessity of organizing the 'resistance of the people' against an enemy, ruthless and cunning in the extreme. Aragon was not alone in his country in using his poetry as a weapon of struggle, but he was the leader of a heroic band which was trying to shape a glittering future out of the blood and tears of the present. In fact the period of occupation became a kind of poetic renaissance for France. Malcolm Cowley in his introduction to the war-poems of Aragon explains this poetic renaissance : "Others including Gide, spoke of a poetic renaissance, and they had good reasons for using the phrase, for poetry was receiving more attention than at any other period since the flowering of the Romantic Movement."

Aragon expresses the difference between the literary ideals of the pre-war generation of poets and those writing during the war in the following words : "First we worked over the problem of language so carefully that nothing seemed worthy of it ; nothing seemed worth-while saying. We said *nothing* magnificently and with the greatest freedom of expression. And now we have found what we had to say, more than we had ever dreamed, can we ever say it well enough ?" ¹

This was the whole difference between the two aesthetic attitudes, the attitude of Dadaist Aragon who said "nothing

¹ Letter to Hannah Josephson May 25 1941.

magnificently" and the patriot Aragon who had discovered what he had to say but was timorous lest he should not say it "well enough". Aragon's poetry blossomed and bore fruit only after he had discovered what he wanted to say. Formal excellence alone had led him into a blind alley. He discovered the way out and new horizons opened out before him.

The poet explains the new attitude of his work in a poem "More Beautiful Than Tears" :

Some people cannot live whilst I'm alive,
I haunt their dreams with an untold remorse,
It seems my songs contain such bursts of brass
That even the dead must hear them in the grave.

Ah, if you wince at echoes in my work
Of clattering tanks, their grating springs' high squeal ;
Know that the storm has downed the organ's peal,
That I, for one, cannot forget Dunkirk.

Bad taste, I quite agree, but unlike you
Some of us saw hell mirrored in the sky,
And we shall not forget until we die
The cup we drained of Brussels' bitter brew..."

The transformation of Aragon proves, if indeed proof were needed, that a burning faith is necessary to give poetry meaning and depth, and that love of form is not enough to infuse life and strength into a work of beauty.

The story of Aragon's life during the fateful war-years is thrilling enough. He was called to service as soon as the War broke out, but kept under strict watch by the collaborationists because of his radical views. He went through the hell of Dunkirk, barely escaping with "his sleeping bag, a few dry biscuits, his raincoat, and the half-corrected proofs of his novel." Again he went into the firing line on the banks of the Seine and was taken prisoner, but managed to escape. After the armistice he devoted all his energy to organizing resistance on the writers' and intellectuals' sector, and pouring out verse, leaflets and

appeals more devastating in their effect than bullets or bombs. He roused and united the people against the enemy as never before. His name became a nightmare to the Fascists, both of the home-brew as well as foreign. On a visit to Paris he narrowly escaped being caught with a bag chock-full of illegal literature. Though sorely tempted to join the guerillas in the battle-line, he realised that his own work of propaganda and organization was no bit less important and managed to stick on to his post of duty to the bitter end.

When the Second Front opened on the soil of France, the National Committee of Writers, Southern Zone, led by Aragon issued the following stirring appeal to French intellectuals :

“The war has been resumed on the soil of France : on the one hand, the Forces of the Interior are mercilessly harrying the enemy, who is now in the clutches of the Allied armies in Normandy. Never before has the duty of Frenchmen been so clear, and no one will refuse to play his part.

“At this significant hour the intellectuals would not want to be left out of the picture. For four years it has been our pride that art, thought, science and literature have remained free here despite the occupation, a fact that has amazed the whole world. During these decisive weeks, is it possible that we should hear nothing from French intellectuals, whose eternal mission it has been to proclaim what all men long to hear whenever the future is obscure ?

“The National Committee of Writers greets all the intellectuals of France and urges them to join the valiant company of distinguished men grouped in the National Committee of Doctors, Jurists, Professors, Teachers, and Journalists, groups which have contributed so powerfully to the preservation of our cultural life. The National Committee of Writers today appeals to all these to face the enemy, to parry the measures he has taken to execute his murderous plans . . .”

This is the driving, flaming spirit in which Aragon’s own poetry was written during the dark war-years. It runs into six

volumes, some of the best in it being translated into English by notable poets like Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice and others. This enormous volume of poetry was written under the most difficult conditions, "in barracks, in trains, in waiting-rooms, or on the beach at Dunkirk." Malcolm Cowley in his introduction to Aragon's war-poems refers to this amazing power of concentration : "He has a power of concentration that shames those of us who need quiet and leisure for their best work, or any work at all. Aragon works anywhere, at any hour and in any company. I have seen him writing in bed, propped on his left elbow ; writing under the grape arbor while boys were noisily mowing the lawn ; writing in a corner of a room that was full of people talking English and sometimes interrupting him with a question : he would answer it, in English, and go on writing French prose. . . .

This gift of composition was peculiarly helpful to him in pouring out the hot lava of words burning in his soul. This enabled him to maintain a ceaseless stream of poetry through all the turbulence and noise of the War.

There are two chief phases of Aragon's poetry written after the Occupation. Under the Vichy regime it could not be direct ; it had to be allusive and suggestive in conveying its meaning : Aragon wrote of the past sorrows of France with a wealth of allusion and learning, but his meaning nonetheless was transparent to his readers. Gradually, his poetry grew bolder and bolder in its pointed attack and Vichy issued instructions to all the literary journals not to print his verse in their columns. This semi-legality imposed on Aragon's work a technique which he could easily adapt owing to his Sur-realist training.

The second period of illegal poetry enabled Aragon to speak more simply and directly and with a concentrated fire of passion which considerations of space in the illegal press made necessary for him. That is why his poems written during this second period appear to be as "simple as the old Scotch ballads."

The first series of poems, collected together under the

title "Heartbreak" have a subtle charm and possess a wealth of imagery that is both novel and arresting. In a poem called "Twenty Years After" he employs deft, 'modernist' strokes to build up a picture poignant and sad as the autumn days of defeat :

Time has refound its lumbering old wain
 And yoked its slow red oxen. Autumn again
 The sun digs holes among the golden leaves
 X'rayed October shivered once but sleeps

Carolingian days. We are do-nothing kings
 Our dreams keep time to the cattle sauntering
 We hardly know men die at the edge of town
 Our sunrise deeds forgotten at sundown

We wander through evacuated homes
 No chains to clank, no winding sheets, no groans
 We are noontide spectres, ghosts in broad daylight
 And phantoms from a life where love was known

We fetch our habits after twenty years
 From oblivion's cloakroom. A thousand prisoners
 Make the old gestures, stiff and obsolete
 In cells where they feel neither cold nor heat....

Through all the striking and suggestive imagery, the "cretonne sky", the "Pompadour style", the cry of the lacerated heart rises :

And this autumnal gilt
 These ormolu riches are
 My love's terrestrial dress ?
 What does she tell me, wind
 What does she tell me ? Stay
 Stay as you did before
 The battles in the east...

("I Wait For Her Letter At Sunset.")

In "The Time of Crossword Puzzles" he exclaims warmly :

I am not theirs because my human flesh
 Is not a pastry to be cut with the knife
 Because a river seeks and finds the sea
 Because my living needs a sister life

I am not one of theirs because the shade
 Exists for lovers, sunlight for the trees
 Winds for the poplars scattering their seed
 On the bee-encumbered, honey-laden breeze....

Who "they" are would be clear to the meanest intelligence, except the self-satisfied, thick-headed Vichyites and the arrogant Gestapo. Incidentally, in these beautiful, sad lines one notices the dominant note of lyricism inherited by French poetry from the wandering minstrels, mingling so wonderfully with the patriotic fervour of the Resistance Movement. The artifices and devices resorted to by Aragon to express his meaning are underlined by his insistence : "Silence would indicate only prudence, or rather cowardice. It was necessary for poets to invent new ways of expressing themselves, not to be dumb."

The form of much of this verse is love-poetry, because it was easy enough to disguise this love of country as love of woman. In fact the whole of the second volume of his war-poetry is addressed to Elsa, his wife. In his poem, "Little Suite for Loudspeaker" he says :

•

Ah, speak to me of love, waves, little waves
 For even the heart in shadow has its cries
 Ah, speak to me of love. We spend the days
 Doubting, foreboding, writing to ourselves
 Ah, speak of love while letters make their slow
 Round trip from Paris to this wilderness....

* * * *

We shall speak of love as long as suns go down
 As long as spring comes back with chattering swallows

I shall not speak of love in bed with dreams for pillows
 Where you and I shall be a golden crown

And you will tell me, Put the paper down."

He refers to other ages and climes to express the burden of his sorrow and his own consuming love of country. In a poem on Spain, he writes with an oblique allusion that is nonetheless all too clear and pointed :

I remember a tune we used to hear in Spain
 And it made the heart beat faster, and we knew
 Each time as our blood was kindled once again
 Why the blue sky above was so blue.

I remember a tune like the voice of the open sea
 Like the cry of migrant birds, a tune which stores
 In the silence, after the notes, a stifled sob
 Revenge of the salt seas on their conquerors

I remember a tune which was whistled at night
 In a sunless time, an age with no wandering knight
 When children wept for the bombs and in the catacombs
 A noble people dreamt of the tyrants' doom

I would like to believe that there is music still
 In that country's heart, though hidden underground
 The dumb will speak and the paralytics will
 March one fine day to the cobla's triumphant sound

The crown of blood, the symbol of anguish and sorrow
 Will fall from the brow of the Son of Man that hour
 And man will sing loudly in that sweet tomorrow
 For the beauty of life and the hawthorn tree in flower.

("Santa Espina")

Even in these poems with their oblique references Aragon utters occasionally cries of despair which must be deeply moving

to a people in mourning. In his poem, "Richard II Forty" inspired by the lines...

You may my glories and my state depose
But not my griefs. Still am I king of those..."

he begins with a full-throated cry of pain :

My country is a barque adrift
abandoned by her one-time crew...

and lapses only later into historical side-references and the refrain :

"I am monarch of my sorrows still."

Through all this poetry with its studied wealth of technique Aragon obtained effects most startlingly original and clever. He had not yet completely cut himself adrift from his Sur-realist moorings. From "The Unoccupied Zone" he wrote :

My love, within your arms I lay
When someone hummed across the way
An ancient song of France ; my illness
At last came clear to me for good—
That phrase of song like a naked foot
rippled the green water of stillness.
("The Unoccupied Zone"

His images are often warm and palpitating, like life itself :

The long cries from the barges on the Scheldt
Wakened the night, like a warm girl, from slumber.
("Spring"

He fires them at you in endless variety, as in the poem

which was left incomplete when he was sent into the firing line on May 10, 1940, "at sunrise" :

The sun is perplexed and pale
 Sad as a house for sale
 A fire that will not rekindle
 Or lips that cannot be kissed...

("The Interrupted Poem")

In these poems of war and 'heart-break' the images often jab at you like a knife-blade :

O months of blossoming, months of transfigurations,
 May without cloud and June stabbed to the heart,
 I shall not ever forget the lilacs or the roses
 Nor those the spring has kept folded away apart."

("The Lilacs and the Roses.")

Often they are harsh, grating, steely, as is only natural in poetry about modern warfare, but they are always singularly apt and impressive. In a poem called "Tapestry of the Great Fear" he indulges his love of imagery to the fullest extent :

This landscape, masterpiece of modern terror
 Has sharks and sirens, flying fish and swordfish
 And hydra-headed birds like Lerna's hydra
 What are they writing, white on blue, in the sky ?
 Skimmers of earth, steel birds that stitch the air
 To the stone houses, strident comet-birds
 Enormous wasps like acrobatic matchsticks...

But surprise is necessarily the peculiar quality of Aragon's imagery which persists through all its patriotic fervour and intensity. Addressing Elsa, in his poem "Night in May", he says :

...I am the road of spiral dawn
 Winding about the obelisk I know
 Where the ill-slumbering, ill-buried go...

But all this artifice and ornament is discarded in the poetry of the second period, when he speaks direct to the reader without any barriers of technique. His Muse is widowed, having lost its beloved freedom. In a passionately moving poem, "I Salute You, My France" he pours out his feelings of hurt and anger :

I write in a land devastated by pest,
One would think a held-over nightmare of Goya,
Where the dogs have no hope save of heavenly feast,
And stooping white skeletons weed the soya.

I write in this den, where not simply a prophet,
But a nation, is thrown to the jaws of the beasts,
And is summoned to never forget its defeat
But to give to the bears the flesh due to their feasts.

How should I speak to you of flowers
And utter no cries in all I write ?
I see but three colours in rainbow-showers ;
You have banned the songs that gave me delight.

Whether of birds and metamorphoses,
Of August fading in the honey-clover,
Whether I sing of roses or the breeze,
My music breaks into sobs, over and over.

The fields are barren when my people groan ;
There burns in the eyes a troubled amnesia
Of poetry.....There's a scent of brimstone
In the air, resembling the mines of Silesia.

It seems absurd to set in rhymes
Facts so well known, though to state them is treason ;
Is it giving wings, say to their crimes
To describe in French verse a German prison ?...

It might be remembered that these words were literally bullets aimed at the heart of the invader. They set the people on fire and sent them rushing into the battle-line. It has also to

be remembered that Aragon who had been playing in his youth at this game of verse-making, as though it were a cross-word puzzle that he was solving or a game of chess where he breathlessly moved a pawn or a queen, was now transformed into a prophet who uttered words which spelt eternal glory or death. He had discovered a faith which he found worth writing for and living for. His poetry had at last found a purpose and with it a life and vigour which it had never known before. This remains in essence the message of Aragon's poetry. One has to have a faith to die for, and, if possible, to live for and write for. His own youth had been dissipated, like that of his contemporaries, in meaningless and purposeless writing. His poetry had at last discovered its own soul, and in this his poetry is symbolical of all modern European poetry.

Some of this poetry achieved "a popularity that poets might dream about here, but never achieve in these days when poetry is practised as a private art". Poems like "The Ballad of One Who Sang at the Stake", for instance, were "learnt by heart in the time of the Maquis and recited at campfires; after the liberation, they were read from the stage of the Comedie Gancaise; they were heard over the radio and even on phonograph records..."²

This unusual popularity arose from the fact that the poet had broken down the walls of his ego and was expressing the feelings and thoughts of millions in the land. The lyric genius of the poet was placed at the service of his people and took on a quality of heroic grandeur. Through all the muted strains of elegiac melody, an epic note of hope and anger rises sharp and clear. For this purpose the poet adopted a simple ballad form in many of his poems. The trailing Alexandrines, the varied rhymes, the intricate imagery, the innovations such as dropping punctuation marks, are all subordinated to the one single desire of liberating the people. This blazing passion for freedom is

² Malcolm Cowley in his introduction to the war-poetry of Aragon.

the sole secret of Aragon's strength and vitality. Through his poetry breathes the fervour of a whole nation in arms against tyranny. His Muse had become the Muse of the French people. He brought hope and promise to them in the dark days of despair :

A prisoner can still compose a song.

A song as running water, white
As bread before the war, a song to rise
Above the manger clear into the night
And high enough to catch the shepherds' eyes

O all the shepherds, sailors, and Wise men,
Carters and dons and butchers and the race
Of image-makers, tricksters with the pen,
And queues of women in the market-place

People in business and commercial roles
Men who make steel or textiles, also men
Whose job in life is scaling telegraph poles
And the black miners—all shall listen again

All Frenchmen are Blondel, in each he sings :
Whatever name we called her at the start,
Freedom—like a whispering of wings—
Answers the song of Richard Lionheart.
("Richard Coeur-de-Lion.")

Through the midnight gloom of the occupation the voice of the people symbolised in the poetry of Aragon rose sharp and clear in a triumphant note :

.....'If it had to be done all over
I would take this road again.'
The voice that sang tomorrow's song
Rose from the iron's chain.

It was the voice of French martyrs, the despair of parvenues and all other scum of the earth. It was a sure guarantee that the fallen would rise again :

What matter if I die, it is enough
If others see that blessed face reborn :
Dance, children, dance your capucine, forlorn,
My country is Dearth, Penury, and Love.
("More Beautiful Than Tears."

REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

India In Kalidasa : By BHAGWAT SARAN UPADHYAYA. With a Foreword by E. J. Thomas. Kitabistan, Allahabad. 1947, XVI + 385 pp. Rs. 25-0-0.

The book under review is a remarkable publication from more points than one. It gives a vivid picture of India, based on a thorough study of the recognised works of Kālidāsa—India's greatest classical genius. The author has not gone into the discussion of the authenticity of Kālidāsa's works because he considers it an unnecessary repetition of the old arguments of scholars more or less familiar to a student of Sanskrit literature. He has thus concentrated on the generally accepted seven works of the poet, viz., *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Vikramorvāśi*, *Abhijñāna-Śākuntala*, *Ritusamhāra*, *Meghadūta* and the first eight cantos of *Kumārasaṃbhava*. For the sake of uniformity, he has used the *Nirnayasagara* editions, which, we are afraid, is not a very happy selection.

It is true that one has to pay a very high price in studying literature from the historical point of view, because, an analysis thus carried out does not form part of the domain of what is, indeed, the essence of poetry—the *rasabodha*; still it is worthwhile understanding our past through the medium of our greatest poet. India has often been characterised as a country without history. This is but partly true, for, thanks to the labour of Indian as well as foreign scholars, a good deal of ever growing material has been discovered, collected and brought to light and attempts—though not very up-to-date—have been made to systematise and regularise it in order to make a connected history of our great country. India possesses a continuous literature and an uninterrupted tradition and it may be contended beyond cavil, as Prof. E. J. Thomas has rightly observed in the Introduction to this book, that we are now far beyond the time when Western scholars could declare that India had no history. The book under review has contributed a considerable amount of reliable material for the use of the future historian. The chapters on Polity, Governance, Fine Arts, Sculpture, Architecture, Economic Life, Education, Philosophy etc. provide a highly reliable account of the life of the Indian people under the Imperial Guptas.

It is dangerous to consider every word of a Hindu poet as authentic history. He is fond of tradition and convention. He derives his knowledge

not only from the extant social pattern but also—and in some cases mainly—from the old *Sastras*. *Kālidāsa* is not an exception. It is gratifying to note that the author of this book is quite alive to this danger. He always tries to distinguish the historical from the traditional or conventional. Yet discrepancies have occasionally crept in, especially in chapters on Social Life, Religion and Philosophy, Education and Learning. Many customs traceable in *Kālidāsa*'s works were really drawn from older works by the poet himself. We do not mean to discredit the mention of these things as futile and otiose; on the contrary, we firmly hold that these are very important in as much as they indicate the poet's reverence to older customs and can be accepted as revealing the ideal of contemporary society.

The works of *Kālidāsa* have been studied here, perhaps for the first time, in such an extensive manner. Facts have been critically analysed and the age of the Imperial Guptas has been elaborately revealed. One cannot but feel rather ecstatic over such a critical and laborious study.

The author has preferred to discuss the date of *Kālidāsa* not in the beginning but at the end of the book. His whole attempt is to discover the unknown through the study of the known. The date of *Kālidāsa* is one of the most disputed subjects in Sanskritic lore. Scholarly arguments shot with sentimental reasoning or prejudiced logic have rendered the problem a most complicated and intriguing one. The author of this book has tried to meet all the arguments set forth by previous scholars and has come to some definite conclusions that may thus be summarised here for our purpose: *Kālidāsa* was a poet of the Gupta Age. The spirit of perfect calm that pervades the works of *Kālidāsa*, precludes them from being placed in the reign of Skandagupta and the closing years of the reign of Kumāragupta. We are reassured that *Kālidāsa* was the embodiment of the Brahmanical ideal, of the age of the great Guptas when order had been restored to a troubled earth, foreigners assimilated or reduced and prosperity broadcast. A. D. 450 is the year of the war with the Pusyamitras and consequently the lower limit of *Kālidāsa*'s age may be put a bit earlier, say, about 445 A. D. The author thinks that the poet may have enjoyed a long life—say, eighty years—and may thus have lived from 365 A. D. to 445 A. D., which coincides with what is called the Golden Age of Indian history. This date tallies with the opinion of Prof. A. B. Keith who suggests that *Kālidāsa* chronologically preceded *Vatsabhatti* of the Mandasor *Prāstasti* wrote his poem in 473 A. D. and had manifestly imitated the style and diction of *Kālidāsa*,

In order to support his conclusion which, incidentally, involves many

'ifs', the author has to face a number of arguments put forth in support of other theories. Most of our hyper-sensitive Indian scholars hold that Kālidāsa belonged to the age of Vikramāditya who reigned in 57 B. C. The author refutes this theory vigorously, his arguments standing on the basis of (1) the absence of any mention of the Śakas in Kālidāsa's works, referred to in the Yugapurāṇa of Gārgī Samhitā which is supposed to be an earlier work, (2) the sense of peace and luxury prevailing in the works of the poet which was not possible in the disturbed conditions of the first century B. C. ; (3) the Puranic traditions and details frequently occurring in the works of Kālidāsa, being mostly the production of the Gupta Age and were only in the melting pot in the first century B. C. ; and lastly, (4) the mention of the enormous number of images of Hindu Gods and temples for which the impetus was received from Mahāyāna—a Buddhistic Bhakti movement of the 1st century A. D.

Now, all the arguments, except the fourth, are based only on inferences and can therefore be dismissed as not proving anything *a fortiori*. The fourth argument is the only one that can stand counter-arguments, though still leaving some room for doubt in its conclusiveness. The author's arguments based on sculptural data are more convincing, though contrary opinions on this point are also not lacking. Thus, the references in Kālidāsa's works to (i) the webbed fingers ('jālagrathitāngulik karah') : (ii) Ganga and Yamunā carrying fly-whisks ('Mūrte cr Gāṅgā Yamunē tadanīm sacāmāre devamaseviṣātām') ; (iii) the *piabhamanyādala* or the halo which is a development of the *chakra* of the pre-Kuśāṇa images etc., are only evidenced in the sculpture and terracottas of the Gupta period.

In another appendix the extent of the empire of the Puṣyamitras has been discussed very ably. The entire book is written with remarkable restraint and historical objectiveness. We warmly welcome its publication and congratulate the learned author for this serious study.

H. Dwivedi.

The Political Thought of Tagore By Dr. SACHIN SEN. General Printers and Publishers Ltd. 460 pp. Rs. 10-0-0.

Of all the aspects of Rabindranath's 'philosophy' the social and political have received the least attention. Modern society which is faced with far-reaching changes needs affirmation and reassurance. In this context, the growth, and terrifying honesty of Tagore's social thinking provides ample material for both theoretical and practical considerations. A

its many achievements and problems ; womenfolk who do not know even to read and who, are born and bred as drudging-machines ; they are all a drag on the society.' (p. 79).

We have also come in for our share of castigation :

"The few fortunate women who have had the benefits of higher education seem to be quite oblivious of their immense responsibilities for the emancipation of the millions of women in the country-side and of the working and middle-class families in urban areas." And worse still : "Also, for many among these educated girls, education seems to be just a luxurious pastime. Ludicrously vieing with one anotherenmeshed in the vulgar indecencies of fashion.....they are as ignorant of the stinking realities in Indian society as canaries in a cage." (p 87). If this is the result, what is the good of education, one may pertinently ask.

Well, what are the remedies suggested for this disease ? Here are a few, taken at random :

The State should enforce certain regulations, so that the pace of progress may be accelerated. (p. 79).

In actual life let every woman feel that she is an independent being with a personality of her own.....with no limitations whatever on her educational, intellectual and civil equality— and then, only then, hark back to the ancient ideal of duties....Not the differentiation of sex but the fact of common humanity, will be the dominant factor. (p. 99).

A fundamental change in social attitude towards woman's functions is necessary (p. 109).

Woman's last word—if, indeed, she is allowed to have her say in the matter—has perhaps been best expressed in the words of Rabindranath. Coming as they do from the pen of the emancipator of India's womanhood and their most consistent champion, I cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following few lines from *Chitra* :

I am Chitra. No goddess to be worshipped, nor yet the object of common pity to be brushed aside like a moth with indifference. If you deign to keep me by your side in the path of danger and daring, if you allow me to share the great duties of your life, then you will know my true self.

Indira Devi Chaudhurani.



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POEMS

IN THIS VOLUME are published translations from the original Bengali poems of Rabindranath Tagore. They were all translated by the Poet himself, with the exception of twelve poems. They have not been published before in any book. References to the Bengali originals are given in the notes at the end of the book. The poems have been arranged in four sections which roughly correspond to four major divisions in the Poet's writings. The selection includes many songs composed by him during the Swadeshi Movement and ends with his last poems.

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Scene from Mayar Khela : 1939. Photo by S. Shaha
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REMINISCENCES OF MAYAR KHELA

By INDIRA DEVI CHAUDHURANI

MAYAR KHELA!—What a host of memories the sweet name conjures up—musical and literary, personal and other-personal! I wonder whether we should have been happier without the fatal gift of Memory.—But without entering into that philosophical discussion, one can safely say that we should certainly have been much the poorer. And that debate is all the more irrelevant in this case, as nothing but pleasant memories are associated with this lively operetta. We were then carefree, stage-free and fancy-free; the inevitable shadows had not yet lengthened in our young lives.

Whether it was the first Bengali musical play of its kind, I am not in a position to say. Probably not. Because even in the Jorasanko Tagore family, and even within our time, it had been preceded by other musical plays. But it is certainly one of the best, and still holds a position all its own. It is interesting to note how the Poet repeats in *Mayar Khela* what seems to be a favourite theme of his, viz., a dreamy lover who is blind to the faithful and peaceful love awaiting him near at hand, who goes further afield to seek his ideal, is dazzled for the time being by the beauty and brilliance of a new love, but soon returns disillusioned by its caprices to the old love still patiently waiting for him at home. Is not this the theme more or less of one of his first poetical works, *Bhagna Hriday*, the Broken Heart?—and also of an earlier prose playlet, known as *Nalini*, and referred to by the Poet in his foreword to the first edition of *Mayar Khela*?

Anno Domini 1888. Just three-score years ago. And we are still carrying on, even after completing the allotted mortal

span of ten years more, and cheating old Father Time.—Cui bono?

How far away it all seems, almost like another birth in another planet. As the poet truly says—transmigration of souls takes place even in one and the same birth. Yet through the hazy distance certain events gleam like glowworms in the dark, or better still, like lamps through the mist of approaching railway-stations at night ; which puts the simile more on all-fours with the long journey of life. The poet flung down upon a bed, slate in hand, humming to himself whilst composing the songs of *Mayar Khela*, on the top-floor of our house at 49 Park Street, where he was staying at the time with my aunt and her first-born Bella (what a pretty child she was, by the way, and how exactly like a pink-and-white wax doll she looked when she came to fetch me from school in a carriage one day, on their return from the hills,—to my great delight !) ; the Fancy Fair held in connection with the first performance of *Mayar Khela* at the request of Mrs. P. K. Ray, to whom it is dedicated) in the spacious quadrangle of Bethune College, in aid of the Sakhi Samiti (Womens Friendly Association for the training of indigent girls, started by my aunt Swarnakumari Devi, the wellknown authoress in 1883) ; the flower-stall I held on the occasion ; the scent and sight of those yellow roses (my favourite flower), wrapped in tissue-paper and decked with maiden-hair ferns seem to be wafted still “through the corridors of time” ; the free-and-easy manners of certain Brahmo young people feeding each other with delicacies, which made a somewhat strange impression (as I afterwards learnt) on a certain Hindu youth brought up in stricter ideas of propriety between the sexes , the actual performance itself, in which all the parts were taken by girls of the family, some dressed up as “boy-friends” to suit the occasion, in bright-coloured satin *shalwors* and *panjabis* and budding moustaches, so that in some cases the resemblance to their fathers became more marked ; the electric bulbs twinkling like stars on the wand-heads of the Mayakumaris—a childish touch which with

all the other old fashioned stage-craft may perhaps evoke a pitying smile on modern lips ;—these are some of the high-lights on the subject, cast by memory. Co-education was not common in those days, much less co-acting in a piece like this. But have we got any 'forrader' in the latter case, even after all this length of time ?

I understand that some 'responsible' people are averse to having *Mayar Khela* acted as being unsuitable for a mixed group of young pupils. In my humble opinion, however, the love-lyrics of *Mayar Khela* have all the lightness and brightness and sadness and tenderness of love, without its passion ; and I really fail to see what harm can be supposed to befall the students by singing and acting the delicate, poetic and simple love-lyrics of *Mayar Khela* with their sweet and lilting tunes, with which all lovers of Rabindra-music should be familiar, if they are not so already.

Later on, (I cannot give the exact date) a private performance of *Mayar Khela* was held in our house at Birjitalao (now the site of the Presidency General Hospital ?) which, however old and ramshackle it might have been, recalls one of the happiest periods of our lives ; and if walls had ears they could have borne witness to many a first night, including *Raja-O-Rani*, and many an unique entertainment, including a dance of Hunzas—a warlike Frontier tribe. This particular performance of *Mayar Khela* was distinguished by my two uncles Jyotirindra and Rabindra appearing in the roles of Madan and Vasanta, the Lords of Love and Springtime respectively, instead of the original Mayakumaris, who conspire to bring about this Play of Illusion in order to provide a pastime for one spring night, but which comes rather hard on us poor mortals in the end. I remember being one of the heroines, Shanta (the quiet girl who is left behind), draped in a blue *saree* without a border (dress first !),— which somewhat foreshadowed the modern fashion now I come to think of it,—but without the embroidered panel, without the inevitable bag, and without any acting to

speak of either, as I was never an adept in the art, on the stage or off it !

Since then *Mayar Khela* has been produced several times with various casts, under various directors, and in aid of various objects. The Birjitalao one was the only performance where raising of funds was not the object, though even in such matters I think the Tagores were pioneers ; as I distinctly remember my mother refusing to let me take part in a performance of *Valmiki Pratibha* in aid of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, sponsored by the family ages ago. The only other public performance of *Mayar Khela* deserving of comment, was one confined to family members, in which both sexes freely took part, and which was very successful. I must not forget to mention in this connection how popular the catchy tunes of this opera were with the English people stationed at Satara with my father, and how lustily they used to join in the chorus "Tobe kano, tobe kano" ! I believe "Oli barbar" was also much appreciated in England, when sung by the Poet to his friends ; which goes to show that some music at any rate can lay claim to universality. I had the temerity to try my hand at translating this particular lyric, but refrain from inflicting it on my readers, in view of the Poet's own translations, which follow.

THE STORY AND THE SONGS OF MAYAR KHELA

(THE PLAY OF ILLUSION)

[THE OUTLINE story given below is based on the Poet's own Bengali synopsis of the play. The idea is to treat the story as the background and insert the songs in their proper places and setting, thus linking them together. The Poet has translated only some of the men's songs. This was done, I understand, with the idea of explaining the same to some non-Bengali girls who took part in a performance of *Mayar Khela* given at Uttarayana in 1939, in the presence of the Poet himself. The principal artistes were Mrinalini Swaminathan (now Sarabhai) who appeared in the role of the hero Amar and Nandita Kripalani—the Poet's grand-daughter—who appeared as Pramada, the heroine.

The last four seem to be renderings from a revised version of *Mayar Khela* which the Poet had undertaken as lately as 1939. But to all intents and purposes their significance is the same with the exception of the last song which is altogether different and has no counterpart in the original version.—Indira Devi Chaudhurani.]

Synopsis of the Play

SCENE I

The dream-maidens by their power create various illusions in the mind of man. Laughter and tears, union and separation, desire and the lure of love—are all contrived by them.

One spring night they conspire to play the game of illusion by arousing feelings of youthful love in the young hearts of Pramodepur—the scene of the play.

SCENE II

The hero Amar's fancy is stirred by the touch of youth, and he longs to go forth into the wide world to seek his beloved. The deep love of Shanta, to which he has grown used, fails to

touch his heart. He sings as if intoxicated with the spirit of youth :

*Is it the first Spring that has come to my life ?
 A strange desire distracts my heart
 enlivened by a new life.
 My life is eager to go abroad
 in this world full of delight
 and offer my heart, to whom I know not.
 Far and near I shall seek her.
 As the breeze from the south rushes out,
 not knowing where the flower is abloom,
 I shall roam for the unknown,
 unaware of my destination.
 Ah, where is the voice which echoes
 the music of the spheres ?
 Where are the eyes that speak of the light of the dawn ?
 I shall seek and seek.*

The dream-chorus sings of the illusion which blinds him to the true love near at hand, and drives him abroad in search of a phantom.

SCENE III

Pramada and her girl-companions make merry in their pleasure-garden. One of them suggests that she should taste the reality of love through its joys and sorrows, but Pramada scorns the very idea and refuses to be caught in its toils.

Kumar, a youth smitten with Pramada's charms, implores her to look favourably upon him, but she turns away, unheeding as the restless south wind.

*Do not, oh do not turn your face away from me and go, my love,
 Stop for a moment and step into my heart.
 You are like a faraway cloud afloat in the summer breeze,
 You are beyond reach, fashioned in a dream.
 Do not evade me and keep me out
 of the ever-flitting play of your life.*

Ashoke, another admirer, then pleads his cause, but also in vain :

*I have come,
I have come to offer my heart
to her whom I love.
I shall hide it in flowers
and keep it on her path,
lest her feet are hurt
by the harshness of the earth.
Let this heart of mine bear her tread,
and if it be trampled to dust
I care not—
for I have staked my all.*

The chorus warns them of Love's net, which is spread everywhere, and entangles everyone in its meshes ; which vanquishes pride, and causes unbidden tears to rise.

SCENE IV

Amar is disillusioned, having failed in his quest of love. When one of Pramada's hapless suitors bemoans his lot, he remonstrates :

*This my own heart is burden enough for me,
then what is the use of seeking that of others ?
If I fail to fathom the mystery of it,
how can I hope to know the heart that is never mine ?
All things seem to me unreal like a dream,
for the want of one to whom I am bound in love.
She is a phantom following her own caprices;
what foolishness is this
that makes me follow her.*

Another friend tries to reason thus :

*If there is nothing but pain in loving
then why this love ?
What folly is this to claim a heart
because you have offered your own ?*

*With burning desire in your blood
 and a mirage before your eyes,
 why this roaming in a desert ?
 He lacks nothing in the world
 who is in possession of himself.
 For him there is the sweet air of spring
 the flowers, the bird-songs ;
 but love comes like a devouring shadow
 effacing the whole world,
 eclipsing life and youth.
 Then why seek this mist that darkens existence ?*

Pramada and her companions enter singing gaily ; they tell the suitors to go on loving, without expecting any return, as Pramada is too engrossed in her own self to take any thought for others.

Kumar and Ashoke sing the praises of love :

*Sweet is the pain that follows love,
 for happiness lies not in one's self ;
 listen to love's call
 and give up all you have.
 Pleasure is like a dewdrop
 that vanishes in a moment ;
 cherish pain that is lasting,
 let your eyes glisten with tears
 that make love clean.
 The lotus-bud blossoms in the sun
 and gladly sheds its petals,
 thus reaching fulfilment,
 which is never in a closed-up existence.
 in an eternal wintry night.*

Amar, who had hitherto held aloof, now breaks into a song of rapturous admiration. Pramada's fancy is also caught, and she entreats her maidens to go and ask what the shy stranger seeks. The maidens, surprised at this sudden change in their friend, cry shame on her, but approach Amar all the same. He however answers their questions in riddles :

*I know not what wine I have drunk
 and my eyes are drowsy with dreams.
 Friends, what harm is there in this ?
 There are some who are wise
 and some who are forgetful,
 Some who are ever awake
 and some languid.
 Some eyes which laugh,
 and others which are tearful,
 but mine are clouded with dreams.*

*My limbs are heavy with the burden of a heart
 and I stand still under the tree.
 Friends, what harm is there in this ?
 There are some who lag behind,
 and some who march on,
 Some who are free of movement,
 and some whose feet are clogged,
 but mine eyes are dazed with dreams.*

The chorus sings of the two flowers that have been dropped into the stream of Love, and are being carried away by its current.

SCENE V

Amar roams disconsolate. Kumar, Ashoke and their girl-friends indulge in playful repartee. Pramada pines for Amar; but her companions advise her not to betray her feelings, as that was not the way to enslave men's hearts.

Amar musters up courage to approach Pramada and lay his heart at her feet :

*Can she to whom I have offered all my heart
 turn it back in disdain ?
 Living away from the crowd
 I know not what are the world's ways,
 I know not if the poignant cry of the soul
 is responded to by the proud,
 and timidly I come
 to the house which is strange to me.*

*My love clings to whatever is yours,
the immensity of your presence
spreads over all my world.*

Her maidens however turn upon him sharply and rebuke him for his daring.

Deeply hurt, Amar bids them adieu and departs :

*I leave you to your
carefree life,
and go to find back my own world,
keeping away from
this tangle of paths
and meshes of misunderstanding.*

Pramada, in dismay, implores her maidens to call him back, and cease their banter. They however again counsel calm, and say that hope deferred would only make Amar seek her the more eagerly.

The chorus sings of the error of a moment that spoils the chances of a lifetime. Such are the bewildering ways of love.

SCENE VI

Amar returns home, and finds Shanta still waiting for him. He recognizes her true love at last, and lays his broken heart in her hands :

*My world is lost,
mute is its music,
My homeless heart
gropes in a lightless path—
and finds itself on the brink
of a gaping abyss.
Your eyes carry the guidance of the evening star,
let them shine for me in the dark.
Many a thirsty hour have I passed
in the pursuit of illusions,
till at the end of the day*

*I come to you, a tired traveller
seeking peace.*

When Shanta warns him that he may be mistaken, he again sings in reply :

*Delusions I did cherish
but now I am rid of them.
Tracing the track of false hopes
I trod upon thorns
and I know that they are not flowers.
I shall never trifle with love,
never play with hearts,
but find my refuge in you
on the shore of the troubled sea.*

Pramada's companions follow him, and entreat him to come back, saying :

*The bee returns again and again to the same sweet
honeyed flower,
It is only then that the blossom coy unfolds its beauty's
dower.*

But Amar begs them to leave him in peace, as they have so many other hearts to play with :

*Do not call me back
who have come away
with the memory of wasted days
and lost hope.
I never claim any price
for the love I have left behind ;
only do not look at me
with the corner of your eyes
and fragment of your favour.
My pain like a river in flood-time
will sweep away from me the mockery of my fate
and you will come to know my truth
in the light of my absence.
Let not your mercy conceal your unconcern.*

Shanta pleads for the unknown maiden, and asks him not to

misread Pramada's heart. Amar however sings that he knows no other heart but that of Shanta :

*She is an apparition, elusive,
whom I pursued in vain and failed to understand
You saved me from my despair
when you called me to your side
and made me feel that I know you.
I am tired of the obscurity
of doubtful reception and avoidance
and playful bargaining
for the price of my love ;
till at last I come to the certainty
that you are the only one
whom I know.*

The chorus sings in sympathy with Pramada's despair.

SCENE VII

In the midst of the spring festival and nuptial rejoicings, the sorrowful Pramada suddenly appears. Amar can hardly believe his eyes, and knows not whether it is the real Pramada or her shadow :

*Is it an illusion, a dream,
Is it Pramada or her shadow ?
Will she surrender herself
to the music of our welcome,
she who dwells beyond our aspiration.*

Shanta intuitively understands the lurking love of Amar for Pramada. She offers to reunite them, but Pramada says it is too late for the faded flower to revive, and returns the proffered garland with her blessing.

Amar does not know which way to turn, but Shanta again saves the situation by promising to heal his wounds with her steadfast love and devotion.

The forsaken and broken-hearted Pramada then sings a last lament :

*With the piece of a snapped chain
ringed round your legs, O bird,
fly away, fly alone,
The pain will cling to your feet,
but the joy will dance in your wings,
when you soar with derelict clouds.*

*Freedom is in pain which is pure,
which is in harmony with the boundless,
in which the shame of self-deceit is destroyed,
and which flings on the dust the cage of the living
death of vain longing.*

The chorus sings a finale explaining Love's Comedy of Errors.

BHARATA MUNI ON MUSICAL VOICE*

By AMIYANATH SANYAL.

I

BHARATA MUNI lays down certain rules regarding the selection of artistes for the special purpose of songs¹ associated with drama proper.² Cryptic though these may seem, they are in fact highly precise and logically comprehensive and at the same time practical in outlook. In the course of this dissertation the great sage refers also to the attributes of the musical voice as recognised by experts and specialists, past and present. He expects the master-artiste and organiser,³ who must be an adept in these matters,⁴ to exercise his function of selection and rejection of artistes in accordance with these rules.

The distinction between natural sweetness of voice and the musical quality in the voice-production of an accomplished artiste has been pointed out by Bharata Muni in the following ślokas :—

*Prayena tu svabhāvāt strīnām gānam nṛṇāḥca vādyavidhīḥ.
Strīnām svabhava-madhurah kāṇtho nṛṇām balatvāḥca. //465//
Yah strīnām vādyaguṇo bhavati nṛṇāḥca gānamadhuratvam
Jneyah so'lāṅkāro nahi svabhāvo bhavati teṣām. //466//*

That is, it is customary to associate vocal music generally with women and instrumental music with men. This is because women are gifted by nature with sweetness of voice and men with muscular ability. Any aptitude for instrumental music

* References are to Verses 458 to 482 in Chapter 82 of Bhāratīya Nātyaśāstra published in Kāśī Sanskrit Series.

1. Dhruvā gīti.
2. Nātya
3. Ācārya
4. Uhāpoha-visārada—Verse 474

found in women or musical voice-production in men must be regarded as acquired abilities, not natural.

A mere natural sweetness of voice, by itself, would not guarantee its adequacy for purposes of musical performance. It is only the cultivated musicality of voice-production which would ensure the communication of the emotive or affective elements.⁵ Therefore the question arises, 'what are the requisite attributes of the musical voice, irrespective of the factor of *natural* sweetness'?

Bharata Muni enumerates in verse 476⁶ these traditionally recognised attributes, which are six in number, viz. śrāvaka, ghana, snigdha, madhura, svaradhānavān and tristhānaśobhī. The first two of these qualities have been defined in the next verse,⁷ which says that śrāvaka is that quality which makes the voice audible even at a distance. If, in addition to this, the voice possesses an even tone, neither cracked nor fluctuating, then it may be called ghana.

Śrāvaka, the first quality obviously means volume. A definite standard has been set by Bharata Muni for the measurement of this quality. A voice possessing standard volume should be audible across an intervening distance of 32 cubits, i.e. 60 feet, taking 22 inches as the equivalent of 1 cubit and not the rather arbitrary 18 inches in the modern system of reckoning.

A voice may be śrāvaka and proved to have the requisite range of audibility, but it may not be steady. Hence the second test. Steadiness of tone is the result of uniform muscular contracture (not contraction) of the larynx. Any dysfunction, nervous or otherwise, will cause unsteadiness of the tonicity of the contracture of the muscles involved during the production of a prolonged note. The voice which does not show any such

5. Vibhāva and Vyabhicārī Bhābas-Chapter 6. Sthāyi and other Varnas-Chapter 29.

6. Śrāvako'tha ghanaḥ snigdho madhuraḥ svāradhānavān
Tristhānaśobhītyovam ca ṣaṭ kanṭhasya gunāḥ smṛtaḥ.

7. Dūrāttu śrūyate yasmāt tasmāt śrāvaka ucyate
Śrāvakaḥ susvaro yastu na vikṣipto ghanāḥ smṛtaḥ.

defect would be adjudged *ghana*, provided it is at the same time *susvara* or musical.

This reference to *susvara* is important. In singing, it is the preponderance of the tonal element which constitutes musicality, whereas in speech, recitation and dialogue pertaining to the drama there are only the intonation elements which serve to convey the meaning and spirit of the words uttered. These intonations,⁸ modulations and adjustment of pitch necessary for histrionic expression have been treated elaborately and with an eye to practical expediency by Bharata Muni in connection with dialogue.⁹ These voluntary or involuntary modulations and fluctuations in the speaking voice are by no means disqualifications, except of course those peculiar undesirable effects which can easily be detected as being due to nervousness or stage-fright on the part of the actor.

But in the case of singing, unsteadiness of any kind in the voice is a positive disqualification, if the artiste has no control over such effects.

Bharata Muni then proceeds to describe the other qualities :

*Svarādhiko vihīno vā hyavirakto vidhānavān
Suśrāvah sattvapuruṣa snigdhastajñaiḥ prakīrtitaiḥ. ||478||*

Composed of greater or less number of notes, which are detached (from each other), is (the quality that is) called *vidhānavān*. O *sattvapuruṣa* ! when such (notes) are produced easily (without effort), that (quality) again is termed *snigdha* (mellow) by those who know.

The implication is that the voice already tested and adjudged as *ghana* should be subjected to a further test for the quality of *vidhānavān* (which is equivalent to *svaradhanavān* of verse 476). When again the voice passes this test, it should be tested for the quality of *snigdhatva* (mellowness).

The inherent tonal quality is *svaradhānavān* or *vidhānavān*,

8. *Varṇakṣku*—Chapter 19.

9. *Pathyayoga*—Ibid.

that is 'well-composed' or 'tonic', when the musical voice under test is found to be composed not only of one single basic note, but of several notes, one basic and the others 'latent' and harmonically related to the basic. These latent notes have been referred to as *anunāda* by Bharata Muni in verse 460.

The *vidhānavān* also suggests that such correlated notes should be in consonance with the fundamental ideas of *gāndharvasamgraha* as stated by Bharata Muni under the item *svaravidhāna* (Chapter 28). *Vidhāna*, that is, desirable composition, is indicated by (a) similarity of notes : *svarasādṛśya*, as of the different *sadjas* of the three saptakas ; (b) consonance or *sāmavāditva* of notes, as between *sa* and *ma*, *sa* and *pa*, etc ; (c) intermediary consonance or *anuvāditva* of notes, as between *sā* and *gā*, *rā* and *mā*, *gā* and *pā* etc. All these follow as logical corollaries of the statements of Bharata Muni himself.

The word *vihina* implies that the component elements may be less in number, so that, as a minimum, only the original note and its similar note remain. It cannot mean *svaravihina* or devoid of notes, because the term *avirakta* meaning 'not detached', 'intimate', at once implies plurality or at least duality, otherwise the question of intimate relation or detachment would not arise at all. *Avirakta* also implies that the side-notes should not distract attention and that none but the fundamental note should be distinctly audible or noticeable. It is certain therefore that Bharata Muni is not here referring to the so-called 'accentuated partials' of modern acoustics, which are distinctly audible to the average musical ear. As for example, the *kharaj* string of the modern Indian Tambura, though tuned to the *sā* of the lowest octave or *mandra* saptaka, usually emits the *gā* of the middle or *madhya* saptaka clearly, and sometimes inconveniently, as every classical musician must have observed. Such a distinction would be *virakta*, i. e. detached from the fundamental note and hence a disqualification for the voice.

Indeed, the implications of the aforesaid text would allow us to infer that in ancient India, at least as early as the traditions

referred to by Bharata Muni, there were musical experts who not only knew of the composite character of the tone produced by the human larynx during singing, but also the nature and relations of the notes composing the tone. Bharata Muni had already mentioned *anunāda*, which if anything, means 'the note which follows in intimate association with the fundamental'. In the *Mahābhārata* also we come across a reference concerning the classification of sounds presumably produced from the trained human voice and the *vīṇā*. These sounds are classified as *iṣṭa* *aniṣṭa* and *samhata*. The term *iṣṭa* has a general sense in which it means rituals and sacrifices for the attainment of certain beneficial results here and hereafter. As a quality of sound it means only those *pure* notes which are free from *anunāda* and which alone were supposed to achieve the desired results. *Aniṣṭa* as a quality of sound means those other pure notes which are not required for the particular ritual or sacrifice in question. Finally, *samhata* as a quality of sound means those tones or sound-effects which comprise more than one note. There is a good deal of evidence to hand which goes to prove that there existed, in very ancient times in India, a peculiar, mysterious system of ritualistic music meant for purposes other than those commonly accepted to-day. It can be seen that the class of sounds termed *samhata* was so named and conceived of, because, from the ideological point of view represented by the ritualistic school of music, such composite tones were isolated from the pure (*iṣṭa* and *aniṣṭa*) class, and were relegated to the purposes of the ordinary musical activities of human society, viz. pleasurable effects (*rañjanā*).

From the era of the traditions of the *Mahābhārata* down to the appearance in 1247 A. D. of the famous work *Saṅgitaratnākara* by *Sāṅgadeva*, the dark age of Indian music is practically silent about its technical aspects as though to bear out the truth of the poets' saying : In the rainy season, when the frogs croak, the cuckoo perforce remains silent. *Sāṅgadeva* however takes up the lost threads and in his treatise we have a distinct reference to the tone as composed of higher partials in the word *tārānu-*

dhvani, which according to Śāṅgadeva is one of the chief constituent qualities of the ideal musical instinct, suśāriratva.

So far as my knowledge and information goes it was not earlier than the 10th century A. D. that experiments, and crude experiments at that, were started in Europe on harmonic relations between musical sounds ; and that the incidence of partials or over-tones of the voice was studied for the first time by Dr. Helmholtz towards the latter part of the 19th century. I cannot tell from what early times European musicians or connoisseurs came to suspect the existence of the partials of the human tone. Dr. Helmholtz, the renowned physicist and physiologist, furnishes us with a reference in his masterly work, *Sensation of Tone*. 'Partial tones of the human voice', he says, 'are comparatively most difficult to distinguish..... Nevertheless they were distinguished even by Rameau without the assistance of any apparatus'. 'Even by Rameau' of course means as early as Rameau, and the place and time of Rameau as noted by the translator of Dr. Helmholtz's work are Paris, 1726. So long as somebody does not turn up and offer to prove that the Greek theorists on Music knew of over-tones, we may fairly conclude that Rameau was probably the first person in Europe to speak about this particular incidence. But Rameau is about five centuries later than Śāṅgadeva. And very much earlier must have been the age of Bharata Muni and the experts referred to by him as 'tajñā' although we have no definite data for fixing the time of such traditional knowledge. All we can say is that in India, even in very early times, there were experts who could discern the existence or incidence of partials (anunāda), merged (avirakta) or distinct (virakta), well-composed (vidhānavān) or its reverse.

Because such phenomena could not be observed or appraised by ordinary persons or even by the average musical ear, Bharata Muni provides that these should be judged by the ācārya, the highest musical authority, possibly including music teachers and directors in dramatic performances. The use of the word sattvapuruṣa in verse 478 shows that the verse is

specially addressed to persons possessing the quality of that is persons naturally gifted with clarity of feeling, understanding and sense-perception. This implies that apart from ācārya, any person having the quality of sattva would competent to recognise the quality of voice described vidhānavān. Other persons, however, should depend entirely on the authoritative opinion of experts. But a mere *inference* of this quality of vidhānavān may be made even by one who is not an expert, nor gifted with sattvaguṇa, from the more apparent quality of snigdhatva or mellowness which, as a rule, goes with the quality of vidhānavān.

Having thus dealt with the first two categorical aspects of the musical voice, namely, (i) projection and volume and (ii) tonal composition and mellowness, Bharata Muni proceeds to discuss the third aspect relating to the range of notes the musical voice is expected to cover. This aspect is intended to be discussed in a second article on the same subject.

FOLKLORIC BACKGROUND OF OLD BENGALI LITERATURE

By SUKUMAR SEN

IN THE texture of the complex pattern of Indian culture the folk element supplied not the least of the brighter designs. But unfortunately very little, if anything at all, has been done to study them historically and scientifically. Folk culture is quite often mistakenly identified with primitive culture. But folk culture is not necessarily primitive. When a society is in a very backward stage its culture cannot but be primitive, but not necessarily *vice versa*. Nor does folk culture differ materially from general culture or civilization. Both are essentially synthetic. But the latter is predominantly selective and pragmatic, while the former is altogether conglomerate and conservative. In a sense folk culture is the resultant of a variety of superimposed strata of general culture, and itself forms the substratum of a contemporary culture. The real test of the value of a civilization is furnished by its residuum that reappears in folk culture in a subsequent epoch.

All culture is conservative, folk culture specially so. Over and above, it is superstitious. If the population is, as in India, not only large but ethnically varied, the conservatism is often much of a nuisance. It draws its sustenance from poverty and ignorance. If there is, as has often happened, religious sublimation or artistic modification of some of the folk cults and lore, that also soon degenerates into a tangled mass of degrading beliefs and inhibitions.

Folklore is the brightest facet of folk culture, and folk poetry is the most valuable item of folklore. Genuine folk poetry is a spontaneous production of a people that live in a more or less primitive condition, outside the sphere of extraneous

influences. Judged by this standard, there is precious little of true folk poetry now existing in modern Indo-Aryan literature. But in the substratum of the mediaeval vernacular poetry of Indo-Aryan, infiltration of folklore is undeniable.

There is always a persistent synthetic activity in the process of culture, whether high or low, general or folk culture. But there is a difference in the degree of synthesis. In general culture, synthesis is thorough and its result is more or less homogeneous. In folk culture, on the other hand, synthesis is haphazard and the result very often heterogeneous. This disparity is reflected in Indian literature too. We may take for instance the saga of the god Siva. In high literature, viz., Sanskrit, the fusion of the several stories of the R̥gvedic sun god Rudra Paśupati, of the Upanishadic mountain goddess Uma Haimavatī and of the Puranic divine couple Siva and Sati, is practically complete and harmonized. To the Puranic story were added in mediaeval Bengali literature, new episodes that percolated from local folklore which belonged to another ethnic group or groups. The result is that we are presented with a god who is a householder, cultivating his own ricefields with the help of a labourer, and yet going from door to door with a begging bowl, sometimes performing dancing tricks as a mountebank, occasionally playing the role of a snake-charmer, who is an ideal husband and yet falls an easy victim to the sex appeal of the first low woman he would meet. There are also glimpses of his unsavoury past when he was suspected of incest with his daughter Manasā, the snake goddess. This scandal was at the root of the deadly enmity between Siva's wife Cāndī and her stepdaughter Manasā.

In mediaeval Bengali literature the folkloric element is generally disguised so thickly that it is not at all easy to reach it. A good instance is the noble, almost epic story of Behulā. Cānd, the prince of merchants, was a devotee of Siva and was endowed with occult power. His wife somehow was initiated into the worship of the snake goddess Manasā. When Cānd came to

know of his wife's secret devotion to an alien cult not favoured by the higher classes of people he was enraged. This brought him into mortal conflict with Manasā. Cānd with his occult powers was quite a match for the snake goddess. The latter was at last obliged to stoop to low tricks. She came to Cānd in the disguise of his young sister-in-law and had him soon ensnared in the meshes of her charms. It was then very easy for her to take away the occult powers of Cānd. Serious misfortunes then began to happen to him. While returning home from a trading voyage he lost his six sons, his entire cargo and all his boats. Still he would not give up allegiance to his god Siva and admit the supremacy of the newfangled snake goddess.

His youngest son Lakhindar who was born when Cānd was away from home grew up to be a fine lad. After a good deal of search a suitable bride was found for him. She was Behulā the only daughter of a neighbouring merchant. Cānd knew that Manasā was determined to destroy the continuity of his line, and she would strike and strike hard on the bridal night before Behulā had a chance to bear the seed of Lakhindar. So he had ordered building of a watertight strong room of steel where the newly-wed couple would pass the bridal night. But Manasā had suborned the engineer who was commissioned by Cānd for the construction of the strong room. A hair-breadth of opening was left for the thinnest of Manasā's snakes to get in and bite Lakhindar fatally. Even at this supreme calamity Cānd remained intractable. Even then he would not submit to Manasā. The body of a snake-bite casualty was usually not cremated, it was set adrift in a river. There was always a lurking hope in the heart of the bereaved family that the body might come to the notice of a man of occult powers who would resuscitate it. But the real reason that lay at the basis of this custom was not that. The snake cult was in deadly opposition to the fire cult. A snake-bite casualty was in a way a victim of the snake-deity. To burn it in fire would be a grave insult to the deity. This is the reason why in the

Mahabharata episode, Janamejaya wanted to take revenge for his father's death by burning the entire host of snakes in sacrificial fire and not in any other way. That would be the most ignominious death for a protégé of Manasā.

So Lakhindar's body was placed in a boat and set adrift in the river nearby. Behulā would not leave the side of her husband. She took charge of her husband's cadaver. Cānd and his family did not try to dissuade Behulā from this not only futile but highly dangerous venture. They took her to be a very unlucky and illfated girl. So they thought it a good riddance. But it is really strange that her own family would not offer her shelter under their roof. It is true that later on, when Behulā had made several days' journey down the river, her brother came to take her back. But that is really an afterthought of or an improvement by the poets. Behulā really followed in the footsteps of Sāvitri when she chose to cling to her husband's corpse. In the original version of the story directly based on folklore she must have been compelled to take that course. It is true that the original story is not before us. But now we are in a position to reconstruct the framework of the original version from another story emanating from Bengal but recorded in Old Gujarati prose of the fourteenth-fifteenth century.

The story is briefly as follows :

There was once a township named Bhīmapura on the Ganges. Suvarṇapura was some distance up the river. Between the two stood the capital of the kingdom. Sulocana, a rich merchant, lived at Suvarṇapura. He had seven sons and a daughter Rukmini, youngest and best loved of all. The guru of the family was Damanaka who was the head of a Saivite monastery at Bhīmapura. One day Damanaka was dining at the house of Sulocana. Rukmini was in attendance with a palmleaf fan. Damanaka noticed that she was now a fully grown up girl, very fair and graceful. He suddenly felt a great desire to possess her. Sulocana noticed the absent-mindedness of

his guru and asked him why he had suddenly stopped eating. Damanaka knew that being a Sannyasin he could not marry the girl and that Sulocana would never let him have his daughter as a concubine. The guru artfully replied that he was disconcerted as a great calamity was impending on the house. Then he told Sulocana privately that his daughter was a very unlucky girl. Sulocana protested that it could not be true ; since her birth all-round prosperity had dawned on his house. The guru replied that it was all very well, but the tide of luck would turn after her marriage ; she would then bring down ruin on both her father's and her husband's family. Sulocana had firm faith in his guru's power of fortune telling. So he was thoroughly scared. He asked Damanaka for a remedy of the coming evil. The guru advised him to put his daughter in a riverworthy floating box and to set her adrift down the Ganges, and then he would perform a propitiatory ceremony.

The merchant did as he was told. Rukmini was put in a sealed box and thrown into the Ganges at the midnight of the next new moon. On the day before the guru had instructed his disciples to come to the bank of the Ganges at the break of day and watch for a sealed box that would come down the river. They were to get that box, which indeed was a present from the river goddess, and to take it intact to the monastery and keep it in a strong room. As luck would have it the box was intercepted, before it reached Bhimapura, by the king's attendants who had come to the Ganges for their morning dip. They took the box to the king who asked his minister to open it. It was opened and Rukmini came out. Her story was soon told. At the order of the king an old monkey was put in the box, the seal was replaced and the box was again thrown into the river. A few hours later the box came into the hands of the disciples of Damanaka. They did as they were told. Damanaka performed the necessary (or unnecessary) rites at the house of Sulocana and hastened back home. On arrival he dismissed his disciples for the day and told them not to come even up to the gate of the

monastery under any circumstance, as he had to perform a difficult and hazardous rite in absolute seclusion and secrecy. When the disciples were off the guru closed the gates of the monastery, took the box to his bedroom, locked the door and the windows of the room and then opened the box. Out came the old monkey, doubly ferocious having been locked up in a box for a long time and hungry to boot. Subsequent happenings can be easily imagined. The guru's wails went for nothing as the disciples had been strictly forbidden not to interfere. But the king had not forgotten to have the guru watched closely. When the king's guards broke into the room the guru was found badly mauled by the beast. The guru had to leave the country. The king married the girl.

We can very well imagine that Behulā too, in the original form of the story, was deemed an exceptionally unlucky girl as she had lost her husband at the bridal night, and consequently she was treated in the same way as Rukmini of the story. Her husband's people naturally would not think of keeping Behulā in the fold of the family. Her parents too would not care to take her back home.

That Behulā was put in a boxlike floating contraption is indicated by the word "majasa" or "mandasa", which being derived from Sanskrit "manjuṣā" can only mean 'box', but the word being unfamiliar was easily misinterpreted by the mediaeval Bengali poets as meaning 'raft' or 'boat'.

Many other poems of Middle Bengali are concerned with folk cults and folk deities, and their subject matter therefore are drawn from or based on folklore. The narrative poems on Cāṇḍī, the *Cāṇḍimangalas*, contain two separate stories, the story of Kālaketu and his wife Phullarā, and the story of Dhanapati, his junior wife Khullanā and their son Śrīpati.

Kālaketu was a poor fowler to whom the goddess Cāṇḍī one day appeared in the form of a brown iguana. Not finding any animal, bird or beast, in his quest that day Kālaketu, was in desperation, and wanted to kill the iguana for meat. The goddess

was outwitted, and she escaped only by showing him a hidden treasure. In this story the goddess is predominantly the protecting deity of wild animals ; she is also the goddess worshipped by fowlers and hunters (*vyadhas*) whose totem was perhaps the iguana. Killing that animal therefore was the most desperate effort of Kālaketu. In the temple at Konarak there is a big stone image of a hunter warrior tallying faithfully with the description of Kālaketu in the *Candimangala* of Mukundarama (last decade of the sixteenth century). On the shield of the warrior are depicted a couple of oversize lizards which can be interpreted only as totems of that particular tribe. It should be remembered that Kālaketu belonged to Kalinga (Northern Orissa) and that the story traditionally originated in that part of the country.

In the other story also, the characters of which belong to the merchant community as usual, the goddess was a forest deity (*Vanadurgā*). But she was the protecting deity of straying or lost animals. Khullanā worshipped her and thereby found the goat that had strayed from her herd, and at the end of the story she got back her long-lost husband and son by the grace of the goddess. As in the story of Manasā it was through the devout wife that the cult of a new goddess became acceptable to the master of the house. There is another folkloric myth imbedded in the story of Khullanā. It is the "Kamale Kamini" (the Lady on the Lotus) episode. The goddess deceived Dhanapati by showing him on the surface of the high sea the miraculous sight of a young girl sitting on a spreading lotus and by turns gulping down and coughing out a couple of elephants. In some traditional representations of Lakṣmi—the goddess of fortune, is depicted as being showered on by two elephants holding pitchers of water by their trunks. Here the elephants, perhaps originally totems, were being devoured. This was therefore an extremely inauspicious omen for a merchant out on a trading voyage.

It is characteristic of folklore that it sometimes incorporates important contemporary or past local events. It first appears in

folk poetry and later is insinuated into folk cult. Even incidents that are not in the least happy, incidents that should be better forgotten, are absorbed into the tradition in this way. It is almost like the growth of living tissues around a bodily wound, covering an imbedded bullet or splinter. A very remarkable instance of this phenomenon is the 'House breaking' (*Ghar-bhanga*) rite which concludes the twelve-day session of Dharma worship in West Bengal. The traditional verses that are chanted at this ritual, record the desecration of places of Hindu worship and the destruction of a temple of Dharma at Jajpur in Kalinga, by Mohammedans. The calamitous event presumably happened on a day when the concluding rites of local "Gajan" (the twelve day session of the annual or occasional worship of Dharma), and the people were not ready offer to any resistance. It is not unlikely that the event was an "incident" in the blitz-like Orissa expedition of Firuz Shah Tughluq of Delhi, made in the year 1360-61.

With the withdrawal of the invading army the resilient folk mind soon forgot the stunning blow. It was then easy to interpret the disaster as a divine dispensation. The incident was eventually twisted to suit the context of the cult and finally incorporated in the rite itself, the rite which was so tragically interrupted. This reconstruction of the real episode is based on the traditional verses, called "Kalima Jālāl" (or simply 'Jālāli'), collected in the priestly handbooks on Dharma worship, mostly compiled in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. To quote, in translation, the first few lines :

The Brahmin residents of Jajpur, comprising sixteen hundred noted families, were indeed very bad men :

They demanded priests' fees from every householder, and when refused they uttered imprecations and brought down disaster.

To curb their menacing predominance Dharma and his divine hosts disguised themselves as Mohammedans :

Dharma, as a Khondkar, put on a black cap and took up a bow and a quiver :

He rode a splendid horse. It struck terror in the heart of the three worlds ;

His one name was Almighty ("Khoday").

Viṣṇu became the Messiah, Brahma the prophet ; Śiva turned out as Father Adam :

Karttika became the Kazi, Ganeśa the Ghazi ; the Ṛṣis were dressed as fakirs.

Discarding his own robes Narada put on the guise of a Sheikh ;

Indra appeared as a Maulana :

The minor gods, in the outfit of soldiers, raised a loud beat of drums.

Not to miss the fun the goddess Caṇḍikā took up the fancy dress of Lady Eve ;

Padmavati appeared as Lady Light.

This divine host then swore a stiff oath and fell on Jajpur.

They pulled down temples and houses of worship ; they plundered ; they shouted, "Catch, Catch".

Serving at the feet of Dharma Śriram Pandit says : It was a pretty mess.

To do away with the prestige of the Brahmin caste

Dharma, in the guise of the Mohammedan, attacked Jajpur.

They destroyed temples ; they desecrated places of worship by pelting in cowbones.

Clutching manuscript books in their hands the priests scurried away.

They brushed off the sacred paint from the forehead of the priests.

The story after this degenerates into the usual folktale type.

Curiously enough the folk mind in Bengal, centuries later, reacted in the same manner at the not at all violent contact of British administration in the seventies of the eighteenth century. Ramprasad, a Brahmin and a village poet of North Bengal began one of his historical ballads in the same strain as Śriram Pandit :

Listen you all to the wonder : the gods in heaven became Sahibs in Britain.

They gave up the daily and the occasional worship, they put on coat and shoes, they took stick in their hands, they placed hat on their heads

They came to Bengal as merchants, they settled at Calcutta and at Cossimbazar.

Auspicious is the year 1172, when the jurisdiction of the Subedar was at an end, and rule of the English commenced.

DAUD AFGHAN

THE LAST INDEPENDENT AFGHAN SULTAN OF BENGAL, BIHAR AND ORISSA

By N. B. Roy

I

DAUD has gone down in history as a reckless and headstrong monarch who caused the undoing of the Afghan race by his adventurous policy. His reign was very brief, lasting only three winters ; yet these thousand days, reminiscent of the “hundred days” were full of events. During this short period a Bengali Hindu, Sri Hari (Sridhar of *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*) rose to a very high position in the Afghan royal service and earned the title of Vikramaditya which had never before or since adorned the name of any Bengali Hindu. Secondly, during his time, the Afghans and the Mughals met one another in a violent struggle which forms a salient feature of Indian history for nearly a century. Daud sacrificed himself in this heroic combat. Yet the contemporary chronicles which praise Akbar to the skies, malign the Afghan King by saying that he was a “dissolute scamp who knew nothing of the business of government.” A critical study of the sources and review of Daud’s reign would clearly disprove such an accusation.

ACCESSION OF DAUD

The Karrani power had been founded in Bengal by Taj Khan, who, fleeing from Gwalior, joined his brother Sulaiman at Khwaspur-Tanda, (12 miles W. of Teliagarhi Pass) and carved

out a small kingdom by the conquest of West Bengal. It grew in strength under Sulaiman who ruled from 1565-1572 A.D. He cultivated friendship with the Mughal power on the west and used his military strength against the frontier Hindu kingdoms of Orissa on the south-west and Kuch Bihar on the north-east. The former kingdom, rent by internal strife and moral degeneration, toppled down like a pack of cards at the mere stroke of Kalapahar's lance in 1568. The same general carried the Afghan army to the very gate of the Kuch capital and struck terror into the rest of Hindu Bengal. Sulaiman was a pious Muslim who advanced the cause of his faith by keeping night-long vigil in his palace with 150 ulemas and by fighting down the Hindu monarchies on his frontier. He died in October 1572 A.D. and immediately after, a struggle for succession began among his sons and nephew. At first his eldest son Bayazid ascended the throne but he was soon removed by Hansu, nephew of Sulaiman. Hansu in his turn, was killed by Mian Ludi, Sulaiman's wazir who seated Daud, younger brother of Bayazid, on the throne. About the same time Gujar, another Karrani chieftain, set up a son of Bayazid on the throne in Bihar and implored Mughal assistance in order to bolster up his protégé.

Munim Khan was then the warden of marches on the eastern frontier. He took advantage of this internal strife among the Afghans to farther the cause of his master and promptly sent to the aid of Gujar two detachments of troops.¹ At the formation of an alliance between Gujar and Munim Khan, Ludi, who had for a long time cultivated friendship with the latter, saw the wind taken out of his sail and quickly adjusted matters by buying off Munim with two lakhs of rupees and other presents.²

As soon as the breach among the Afghans was repaired, Daud ordered hostilities against the Mughals for which he has been censured by modern historians. They have however

1. Beveridge : tr. of *Akbarnama*, III, 118-19.

2. Eng. tr. *Tab. Ak.* II, 481.

ignored the important fact that for a long time a sort of armed peace had been existing between the Afghans and Mughals and hostilities were averted only by Ludi's moderation and desire for peace. In 1565 Sulaiman came away from the gates of Rhotas, at the approach of the Mughal troops to the aid of Fath Khan ruler of the place. In 1566 when Munim went to visit Sulaiman's camp, the Afghans planned to murder the former in the expectation of a march upon Delhi. As the *Akbarnama* says, "The Afghans thought that the sublime standards were engaged in conquering Chitor and many of the great officers were there, and if they disposed of the Khan-i-Khanan, there was no one between them and the throne". On this occasion Munim escaped through the intervention of Ludi Khan. Next year, the Mughal officer offered to surrender Zamaniya to Sulaiman, but the latter averted hostilities by declining to occupy it.³ The Mughals on their part were no less eager for war with the Afghans. A strong party in Akbar's court gave priority to a campaign against Bengal over that of Gujarat. Akbar disregarded their wishes, but when news of Sulaiman's death reached him in the course of his march to Gujarat, he regretted the step he had taken. As the *Akburnama* states, "The God-worshipping Khedive... said with his holy lips that had the news come while he was in the capital, assuredly he would...have addressed himself in the first place to an expedition to the eastern provinces".⁴ Under such circumstances it was no act of foolish arrogance on the part of Daud to forestal his enemy by striking the first blow against him, particularly when he was engaged in a distant theatre of war.

FIRST CLASH OF ARMS, 1573 A. D.

A very fine army had been built by Sulaiman consisting, according to the dubious authority of Riyaz-us-Salatin, of 40,000 cavalry, 3,300 elephants, 1,40,000 infantry, and 20,000 pieces of

3. Beveridge, II. pp 884, 478.

4. *Ibid.* III. 6.

fire arms. At Daud's order, they marched under the leadership of Ludi Khan and captured Zamaniya from the Mughal *qiladar*. Munim hastened with his army from Gorakhpur and met the Afghans near Ghazipur, but finding them superior in numbers, sued for peace. His terms were rejected. The Emperor Akbar was then engaged in a violent fighting in Gujarat, and Munim, hopeless of being reinforced, knew not what to do.⁵

When the affairs had taken such a critical turn for the Mughals, Ludi caused the reversal of the Afghan fortune by a sudden *volte face*, and suspension of hostilities with the Mughals. The reason behind this unexpected step was the murder of his son-in-law Yusuf Karrani, son of Taj Khan and an aspirant for the Afghan throne, by Daud. The masterful wazir, Ludi Khan was the *de facto* ruler of the Afghan state like Bairam Khan during the minority of Akbar; he was so aflame with wrath on hearing the news that he turned his arms against Daud and commenced march towards Tanda. He was deserted by chiefs like Kalapahar on the way and compelled to retreat to Rhotas where he declared his independence and applied to Munim Khan for help.⁶ The repeated appeal to the arbitrament of the Mughal sword drove Daud to decide upon drastic action. He resolved to stamp out the menace to his throne by removing Ludi. But he masked his design beneath a show of great affection and appealed to Ludi Khan to sheath his sword. "You are in the place of my father, Sulaiman", wrote Daud in a message to Ludi, "if on account of love to your family, you have become angry with me and gone off, you have done your duty, and I am not displeased with you. In every undertaking I seek assistance from you. At this time, when the sublime armies have come against me, do you also gird up the loins of energy for battles ; I make over to you the army, the treasure and the park of artillery." Gujar Karrani also persuaded Ludi to give up opposition and join the Afghan cause. Cajoled and flattered, Ludi dismissed

5. *Ibid.* III, pp 28-81.

6. *Ibid.* III. 81.

the Mughal troops sent under Tengri Quli Khan to his support and rejoined the Afghan standard with his following.

RENEWED CONTEST WITH THE MUGHALS

Hostilities had been quenched by Ludi's desertion from Daud ; it flared up again on the bank of the Sone after his union with the Afghan king.

But, in the course of the battle, Ludi was murdered. According to the *Tabaqati Akbari*, Daud inveigled Ludi to an interview and under the instigation of Qatlu Khan and Srihari, had him arrested and killed. On the other hand, according to Badauni, Ludi with a corps of 10,000 horse-men planned to kill Daud (*Qasd-i-dafa*,) when he was out on *shikar*. But this design was frustrated by Daud's resourcefulness and the unflinching support of the Afghans to him. The *Makhzan-i-Afghana*⁷ clinches the whole matter by saying that Ludi "who was the premier grandee of Sulaiman rebelled against Daud and was murdered by him." After Ludi's murder his followers joined the Mughals along with Ismail Karrani, son of Ludi. Munim Khan now strengthened by the adhesion of a party of the Afghans resumed the offensive and after crossing the Sone drove back the Afghans to Patna, about Jan-Feb. 1574.

SIEGE OF PATNA - A MYTH

The new city of Patna on the Ganges which had been built by the Afghan king Sher Shah, had passed after many vicissitudes under the Karrani rule. Daud turned it into a bastion of resistance against the Mughals. The contemporary historians would make us believe that the city was closely invested by Khan Zaman, but such a posture of affairs did not arise, for Daud maintained communication with his territories to the east, south

and north, got a regular flow of supplies, specially from Hajipur, keeping the Mughals pinned down to a line drawn west of the city.

In the early stage of fighting Munim's exertion to cause a breakdown of the Afghan opposition was great. One of his lieutenants Kakar Ali Khan sacrificed his life in an encounter with the enemy. Another, Khan-i-Alam, made a heroic attempt to capture a group of mounds lying to the south of the city called Panjpahari. The Mughal general tampered with the loyalty of an Afghan chief Hasan Khan Batni and seduced him to his side. Yet the Afghan strength was not in the least shaken. On the other hand, Munim became very much alarmed owing to the approach of the rainy season and made repeated representations to the Emperor to come in person and conclude the campaign.⁸

Moved by Munim's appeals, Akbar embarked on a river voyage on the 15th June, 1574. After thirty-two days' journey, he reached Yahiapur within the sarkar of Jaunpur. Munim had previously represented to the Emperor that on his marching to the vicinity of the aforesaid city, Daud would "inevitably become a wanderer in the wilderness of ruin." This forecast now proved entirely false. As Akbar proceeded in his royal barge across the territory of Jaunpur, Daud remained firm in his citadel. In the month of July the Mughals made a night attack upon the Mankali chiefs, who had been keeping a sleepy watch over the Punpun Dam and captured it. It was a great victory; the dam had threatened to flood the Mughal camp; it was now broken down and the danger to their safety removed. On the 25th of the same month an Afghan attack by Isa Khan Niyazi upon Qiya Khan's trenches was repulsed, the Niyazi leader himself being slain. Nevertheless, Munim's apprehension of the Afghans grew. On the 26th he again represented to the Emperor his deficiency in armaments and solicited prompt

8. Beveridge: III. 116.

aid.⁹ A week later on the 3rd August Akbar reached the neighbourhood of Patna.

A very dramatic change now came upon the war and what could not be accomplished by Munim within six months was now done by the Emperor in three days.

Immediately upon Akbar's arrival, Daud took recourse to wiles in order to put off enemy operations so that they might be caught in the full tide of the rains. He had long kept in his camp the Mughal envoy Khaldin Khan who had previously been sent by Munim with a message counselling submission. He now sent Khaldin Khan back along with an envoy of his own expressing his desire to submit but pleading his inability "to kiss the threshold until he had amended by good service" his omissions and commissions. Akbar saw through this subtle manouvre and abruptly terminated the farce by offering Daud the alternative of "rubbing his forehead on the threshold of fortune" or war.¹⁰

Events now moved fast; on the 4th August the day on which Akbar dismissed Daud's envoy, he ascended the Panjpahari with a view to reconnoitre the fort and was shot at by the Afghans. On the 5th he planned an amphibious attack on Hajipur which was executed by Khan-i-Alam assisted by veterans like Gajapati Shah of Jagadispur on the 6th Hajipur was taken; the Bengal flotilla thereupon lost the command of the water and that very night Daud, who was yet determined on holding out, was drugged by his officers, put on board a pinnace and rowed away towards Bengal.¹¹ On the following day Akbar entered Patna. It was a miracle. Well might he have exclaimed, "*Veni, Vidi, Vici*, I came, I saw, and conquered." Abul Fazl, who could not understand the magnitude of the whole enterprise naively remarks, "By the good fortune of the Shahinshah, such a well-equipped army which had been the cause of much foolish boasting on the part of Daud, had the dust of destruction thrown on its head without a battle. Their secular and spiritual reputation was

9. Beveridge : III. 182

10. *Ibid* : III. 186-87.

destroyed." It was now the height of the rainy season ; the Ganges was in spate ; the rivulets and nullahs had now overflowed their banks and flooded the country with water. Yet within only two "astronomical hours" of the occupation of the city of Patna, Akbar launched upon the pursuit of the Afghans. He swam across the Punpun and rode up to one march beyond Dariyapur, about 50 miles beyond Patna. But the Afghan leaders evacuated their army and effected the retreat in so able and masterly a way that excepting 265 elephants, purses of gold and armour thrown into the Punpun, boats loaded with goods and Husain Sur son of Sultan Adili who had fled from the Mughal camp and joined the Karranis, nothing could be seized by the imperial army. The Afghan serpent was neither scotched nor killed ; it merely glided away to a safer retreat in order to be able to strike again at a favourable moment. Akbar, therefore, lost no time in appointing Munim at the head of an army of 20,000 men to renew the pursuit of the retreating enemy. The general started upon the march on the 12th August, and reached Tanda within six weeks on the 25th September, after overcoming light opposition at strategic places like Surajgarh, Mungir, Colgong and Garhi.

The capture of the Afghan capital made Munim master of Bengal. A couple of Afghan chiefs, Qasim Khan *alias* Qasu and Mahmud Khan, no doubt, challenged his authority by invading the borders of Bihar but they were repulsed and Munim, easy of mind, sorted out the fiefs of Bengal among his officers ; Ghora-ghat to Majnun Khan Qaqshal, Sonargaon to Itimad Khan and Satgaon to Muhammad Quli Barlas. All this time the anxiety of imperial officers about the progress of the Bengal campaign pinned down Akbar at Jaunpur. So great was the dread of Daud !

To be continued.

OF MYSTICAL POETRY

By N. N. KAUL

MYSTICISM IMPOSES silence. Poetry is speech excelling in excellence. Their marriage, at the first blush, is a prospect for disaster. "If the *Tao* could be comprised in words", says the great Chinese mystic, "it would not be the unchangeable *Tao*". Speech returns from there, says the wisdom most ancient. Meek reverence, unbounded love and an awe, striking the beholder dumb, is the universal news from the mystics : and they speak with one voice. Is our task hopeless then ? And should our lady, who brought us the first word, who is the ladder of our commerce with Gods, who hails from spheres celestial—this omniscient lady of incomparable charm, who has enthralled the best of the race—fail in her own ancestral home ? Perhaps not. On the contrary, she is at home there, and shines with a divine splendour when she sings of the Joy inflable of Heaven's land. Dante tells us that to relate again the glory of Light

Surpasseth power of him who comes from thence ;
For that, so near approaching its desire,
Our intellect is to such depth absorb'd
That memory cannot follow.

or again

Words may not tell of that transhuman change ;
And therefore let the example serve, though weak,
For these whom grace hath better proof in store.

But Dante himself in his immortal song brings us tidings of good cheer and hope. What is more, in his hands poetry touches its high-water mark ; and *The Divine Comedy*, of all the literary masterpieces of Europe, with which we are familiar, proves that Mystical Poetry is the highest type of poetic expression because it

sings of the most sublime joy of which we are capable. The joy of existence manifests itself on all planes—the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual, the aesthetical, the spiritual and the cosmic, and so is the poet a singer on all these planes ; and if we say here that the Mystic-poet is the highest type, it is because he throbs us with the rhythm of the most intense joy and thereby is the elder brother of all poets.

Before proceeding further, let us be clear about the meaning of *Mysticism* and *Poetry*.

Occultism, esotericism, transcendentalism, gnosticism, miracleworking—such different conceptions does *Mysticism* conjure up in different minds. The *Oxford English Dictionary* even goes to the extent of suggesting in parenthesis that the word is often used contemptuously. With all that we have nothing to do. The first and the last, the most ancient and the most modern quest of man is for unlimited freedom, unfettered, uninterrupted joy, unshakable feeling of immortality and for wisdom that delivers the embodied being from fears and doubts. From all ages and all countries (our own in particular) comes to us the personal testimony that that Divine Union of the finite and the infinite, the mutable and the immutable, the mortal and the immortal which stamps human life with its true meaning is a fact and not fiction, a reality and not mere illusion. This chorus also sings of the same music of the spheres, and brings us intimations of the highest delight. It is said that the paths are many while the goal is the same. But even the path that leads finally to the shining gateway of wisdom is one, and only one, beyond the preliminary stages, and this most ancient path despite ups and downs, fortunes and misfortunes, sufferings and persecutions, has been handed down to this unique community—the mystics. A mystic is one who follows the same path ; where he does it—in a cave, in the wilderness, in a jungle, the desert, in loneliness or in a crowded city—is immaterial. He can follow the language that his kindred in spirit speak, whether living or dead. And scattered all over the world, this undying

race carries on unabated its struggle with infinite compassion and love for the noontide of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, holding aloft the torch of immortal flame. It is in this sense that the word is used here.

To define poetry is to cripple its wings. If one says merely that poetry is rhythmic speech or that it is a sort of artistic expression, that is perhaps saying nothing. To restrict it to the outpourings of imagination, exuberant energy, the churning of the emotional storms, or to view it as a vehicle of universal ideas or, in the words of Matthew Arnold, a criticism of life, and the noble and profound application of ideas

On man, on nature and on human life

under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, is to talk in terms delightfully vague. Our contention would be clear when we put the question : "Why should poetry be written at all?" That invention is its cornerstone, or that the poet is a maker as the Greek origin of the word signifies, does not bring us to the heart of the problem. Some light may be thrown if we pry into the poetic feelings. And here are the words of Sri Aurobindo, the great living mystic poet : "... a delight interpretative, creative, revealing, formative" is what he says, "the poet feels and which, when he can conquer the human difficulties of his task, he succeeds in pouring also into all those who are prepared to receive it." And one might perhaps agree that the under-current of the urge in the highest poetry, in the words of Cousins, "lies in the apprehension of something that is a reflection of fundamental passion of humanity for something beyond itself, something that is a dim fore-shadowing of the divine urge which is prompting all creation to unfold itself and to rise out of its limitations towards its God-like possibilities". Joy, to our way of thinging, is the cause, the sustenance and the end of poetry ; and a true poet is a minstrel singing of the same joy to his lady-love Beauty.

A mystical experience includes necessarily the poetic because Truth is the embodiment of Beauty. And if all mystics are not poets as well, it is because for all of them the realization is not that of joy. When joy is super-abundant and includes the other qualities of the ultimate reality, the mystic has to turn into a singer as well. Chaitanya, Mirabai, Kabir and a host of others are examples of such mystics.

If it is granted that the mystic is a seeker and seer of Reality and the poet a worshipper and possessor of Beauty, even though in some fleeting moments, then we shall be faced with another set of questions, that is : What is Reality ? What is Beauty ? And how are they related to each other ?

Both the mystic and the poet derive their faith not by arguments and reasoning, but by a direct apprehension and immediate possession ; and the faith of both is beautifully expressed by the mystic poet of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. Of Reality, he says :

From joy all these beings are born,
By joy they exist and grow,
To joy they return.

It is as ridiculous to fix a conception of Beauty as it is to define Truth. He who sees Truth in everything is a true mystic ; he who can see Beauty in everything is perhaps a true poet. Not all the tomes of the aesthetes or volumes of metaphysicians can teach us a word about what is Beauty. An oft-quoted line of Keats is perhaps enough :

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

All that gives us joy or can give us joy is beautiful.

As for the relation of Truth and Beauty another line from our poet would do :

Beauty is truth, truth Beauty.

If we are agreed that joy is the essence of the presence of both Truth and Beauty, the issue is simplified. The mystic poet is the poet of poets, who not only sees Truth as a mystic, but

brings news of the beauty of his unique vision and experience of his supreme delight. He hears the word, so to say, and his ecstatic trance, while in the grip of the cosmic rhythm, is translated for us. And it so happens that even when these words are expressed in prose, they are too poetic to be classed otherwise than poetry. This one is a translation of Sri Ramakrishna's experience for instance--

".....everything around me vanished from sight. I felt as if nothing existed, and in their stead I perceived a boundless effulgent ocean of intelligence. Whichever side I turned my eyes, I saw from all quarters huge waves of that shining ocean rushing towards me, and in a short while they all came, and falling upon me, engulfed me completely...my soul was rolling on the ocean of ineffable joy...."

Or take this from Dante :

As in a quiet and clear lake the fish.
If aught approach them from without, do draw
Towards it, deeming it their food ; so drew
Full more than thousand splendours towards us ;
And in each one was heard : "Lo ! one arrived
To multiply our loves!" and as each came,
The shadow, streaming forth effulgence new,
Witnessed augmented joy.

Though bluntly, yet surely, Whitman bursts out in open-throated lines :

As in a swoon, one instant
Another sun, ineffable, full dazzles me,
And all the orbs I knew, and brighter unknown orbs..
One instant of the future land, Heaven's land.

The plunge of "Thought the Paraclete" 'lost in the vasts of God' reveals

Sun-realms of supernal seeing,
Crimson-white mooned oceans of pauseless bliss

to Sri Aurobindo.

We need not multiply citations, and may refer to the Eleventh Book of the *Gita* where the higher self (represented by

Arjuna) is face to face with the World Spirit. A greater poetic vision is difficult to find except in the Hymns of the Rg Veda and the lofty heights of the Upanishads. The Rg Vedic hymns are the peak performance vouchsafed us human beings, and it is in them that poetry fulfils itself, attaining to the height of the mantra—"that rhythmic speech which as the Veda puts it, rises at once from the heart of the seer and from the distant home of the Truth"¹—speech embodying in itself some share of the omnipotence from the regions it comes.

Quite another array of symbols, ill-digested and loose-knit, faces us in the works of Blake. Much of his poetry falls short of the highest achievement because he enmeshes himself in them and is caught in his own net. The mystic is no partisan. The barriers of country, creed and race do not exist for him. His God is not a citizen of a particular country. For him the Light, that is the cause and support of this universe, alone matters. The poet, on the other hand, is a messenger of joy. It is not his business to enter into polemics with his contemporaries on his beliefs or disbeliefs. He is neither a teacher nor a moralist, as long as he is a poet; and if he brings treasures of Truth from the great source, that is a bye-product of his art. If he is concerned about convincing others that it is the religion of a certain prophet that is all in all, and that a certain geographical boundary is the mother of all lands, then he is descending from his high calling. Poetry is essentially a personal utterance and a lyrical expression. The poet is a contingent creator; the mystic a universal seer. And the mystic-poet the finest blend of the two. Blake strayed very long in the intermediate plane of visions and voices through which all travellers on the Path are warned to hurry along. For the snares of form should not occupy us long when we are plodding on to see face to face the formless and all-Light. Nevertheless, this should not imply any detraction from the unrivalled place that Blake occupies in the English poetry.

¹ *Aurobindo: The Future Poetry.*

All these intimations are, however, of the promised land. Not all reach there. It is not for the ease-loving and the slothful, the weak-willed and the wicked. Constant aspiration and undiminished divine enthusiasm are rare commodities. It is easier to slip down than to go up. He who chooses this road must bid farewell to laziness on all planes. The road stretches on a wide expanse, then the path becomes narrow and steep. Marshes and sloughs are not uncommon; the memory of things left behind is a constant obstacle to reckon with. Snares increase, vices magnify as the pilgrim moves forward. The air becomes rarefied in the higher reaches. From the movement of the first dawn to the hour of the final blaze of noon it is a long way off. Many are called, a few persevere and rarely one pure in heart sets foot on the holy land. And if our conception of mystical poetry is restricted to the interpretation of the final vision alone, much of what may come under it now will have to be thrown overboard. The *Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* will be reduced to a couple of pages. How great a loss would it be, then? Some of the best gold of the poetical creation of the race will lose its value mixed up in dross. If we are to include among mystics only those who establish themselves in the castle of Truth, then we may be left with few names. But there is the dawn of the day when the real adventure of the free spirit begins, and there is the journey. The path itself is of ceaseless struggle, a perpetual endeavour, constant vigil, unabated upward looking, hourly surrender, purer and purer consecration, and the hopes and glimpses—the words of encouragement and the moments of exaltation that come to the pilgrim, extract from him songs of love and adoration for the beloved for whose embrace he presses forward restlessly. His delicate imagery, subtle allusions, tender symbolism and breath-taking gusto saturate his immortal speech. News from the promised land comes now and again. The traveller feels many times as if he is on the verge of meeting with the beloved. Illusions try his wits, On occasions he strays from the path, but joins it again. His adoration

grows with each step forward ; his ardour increases as the time passes. The moments with the beloved, the moments of ecstasy, contemplation and rapture are cherished, and like the lover who sees consummation in sight, he is impatient to bring the news of his impending happiness to his intellect and lower members and to fill them with it. The moments of waiting try his patience. His lamentations become helplessly articulate. The separation gives him extreme anguish. And in this unique adventure of love the suffering he endures for his beloved is transmuted into the finest songs for humanity. Rabindranath charms the world with them ; the Sufi poets intoxicate us with the wine of their *soma rasa* of love, the *amrita* of adoration, and they sing with joy. All this is poetry *par excellence* ; and all this is mystical poetry, without doubt.

For Omar Khayyam

A book of Verses underneath the Bough
 A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
 Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
 Oh, Wilderness were paradise enow !

is enough. The delightful presence is his unfailing support, companion and friend, and no place of the world is wilderness for him who has drunk from the cup of the mystical wine of wisdom. He tells us in the most happy—and roguish—allusions—

You know, my friends, with what a brave Carouse
 I made a Second Marriage in my house ;
 Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
 And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

The wine is no earthly wine ; that is unmistakable ; and it is the triumph of the poet that he can beat the infidels in their own game. Here is something positively exhilarating :

Before the phantom of False morning died,
 Methought a voice whithin the Tavern cried,
 “When all the Temple is prepared within
 Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside ?”

Come, fill the Cup, in the fire of Spring
 Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling ;
 The Bird of Time has but a little way
 To flutter—and the Bird is on the wing.

Could anything be more direct, more poetic and more delightful ?
 A rich feast of symbols, the beauty of convincing allusions and
 the finest poetry !

One might find it difficult to appreciate it all. The difficulty is genuine. We cannot understand a poet, a mystic poet much less, unless we ourselves are fired by his zeal, are torn by his conflicts, have cause for lamentation such as his, are sincerely struggling to overcome darkness and ignorance, or are smarting under the wounds of separation. What is this bondage he is talking of, one might cry impatiently, and what is this harping on freedom ? For him it is very real, and one may appreciate him only if one dives deep into his own heart, and takes a yet deeper plunge. If a poet does not take us into his confidence, or make us a partner in his joy, it is because we do not have poetry in our breasts or passion for Truth in our souls. But let us keep to what they sing. Mark the entreaty of the great Rumi, for instance —

O sun, show forth Thy face from the veil of cloud, .
 For I desire that radiant flowing countenance.

Rabindranath cannot bear separation, and utterly pathetic is his plaint :

Away from the sight of thy face,
 My heart knows no rest nor respite,

“At the immortal touch of thy hands”, he whispers, “my heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.”

The merger of the human and divine love is the unique distinction of the Sufi poetry that reached its zenith in Persia and among the *bhaktas* of India. Consciously or unconsciously

what makes for the best is in use here. A simple line from Mirabai

Mere to Giridhara Gopala dusra no koi.

clothes the profoundest truth, and infects us with her own abandon and passion even if we do not catch the profound meaning. That is what true poetry is out to achieve and fulfils in *mantra*. The question whether poetry is merely the warbling of sleek-cheeked, long-haired, dreamy-eyed, impetuous chaps or whether it can discharge the functions that Shelley dimly visualised for it, as also the problems of the relations of poetry and propaganda, and poetry and the masses, can be seen in this light alone.

The omnipotent spirit does not reveal its powers on the spiritual plane alone, however. The poet can, not only release spiritual powers, but also the elemental passions and all degrees of puissance from these to the acme of omnipotence. It is only when the poet is in touch with the ocean of joy, which comes down and transforms his entire being, that he can sing—

Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme
 And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine
 Channels of rapture opal and hyaline
 For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.

Joy trickles down to the lower planes, and though its exuberance there is fitful and tardy ; it draws its inspiration from the same source. It touches a part of the being and can at best have affinity with the similar part of being in the reader. This brings us therefore to the lesser phenomena of mystical poetry. And hereafter we use this word in the general sense.

When, in his great Ode, Wordsworth regales us with his sweet memory that

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
 The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Apparell'd in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.

That is mystical poetry, too, but with a difference. In the case of a Sufi poet, it was looking forward, or after the union, playfulness with the beloved ever-present, but here it is looking backward to the beloved lost, beyond hope of any meeting again, to an experience whose flame is extinguished and cinders of memory are all that remain. The mysticism of Wordsworth, then, is not the genuine article, and one may agree with Aldous Huxley when he calls it nature-mysticism.

The amazement and wonder at the universe around us has drawn poetry from the soul of many sensitive spirits, but if this amazement does not lead to further search, if the scales do not fall from the eyes, if there is no incentive to go deeper : then the true line of the Great Rhythm which is the fountainhead of all poetry and of all art has not been reached.

We have said above that mystical poetry does not appear on the highest regions of intuitive and imaginative flights alone. Considered widely, it manifests in all spheres just as mysticism and poetry appear on all levels of being. A pithy sentence of Emerson says : "The people fancy they hate poetry, and they are all poets and mystics."

Mysticism is essentially union, at-one-ment, *yoga*. To be at home in the universe is not the unique privilege of the yogi, the sufi and the mystic. Each of us makes his or her own terms with the inner and the outer world. The primitive tribesman moves in rhythm and his joy of sheer physical existence has its tongue in a simple song ; a D. H. Lawrence creates another harmony of his, and his prose creates the atmosphere of poetry. Henri Bergson in his inimitable style, to which no one can deny a poetic designation, gives meaning to the sway of instincts and the *elan vital* becomes a mystical wine. Whitman is out to accept all, and Aldous Huxley has rightly called his mysticism the sublimated sexual mysticism. There is dialectical mysticism, there is aesthetical mysticism, there is national mysticism and racial mysticism, and I may go further and say that there is a Marxian mysticism in fashion and at large today. There is

union on every plane, and the joy of the union bursts forth in articulate notes. But all this is momentary alliance, something shifting, an *ad hoc* compromise. Wordsworth may chant :

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live
That nature yet remembers
Was so fugitive.

Or sing

Of joy in widest commonalty spread.

Yeats may poetise

O chestnut tree great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the hole ?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance ?

Keats may speculate truly that

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter ;

But their joy is not the fullest joy. Sri Aurobindo's lines

Rose of God like a blush of rapture on Eternity's face
Rose of love, ruby depth of all being, fire passion of grace !
Arise from the heart of yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss ;
Make earth the home of the wonderful and life Beatitude's kiss.

strikes an entirely different, integral, rhythmical, joyful note, a note of the truly mystical poetry ; the words come straight from the heart of joy, raise pedestals for each letter of the speech caught in the Divine Rhythm, and establish him and the galaxy of the world's mystical poets as the shining stars in the firmament of poesy.

WORLD PEACE AND MAHATMA GANDHI

By R. P. GHOSH.

Till the war drums throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the *Parliament of man*, the *Federation of the world*.

—Alfred Tennyson.

LONG BEFORE ALFRED TENNYSON saw the vision of “the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world”, since practically the dawn of civilization, idealists have dreamt of World Peace and World Order, and have sought to translate their dreams into reality, each according to his own lights. Powerful military men like Alexander and Caesar, Napoleon and Hitler, thought that peace in the world could only be achieved by establishing a world-state through military conquest. The ambitious dreams of these “war-minded pacifists” have, however, remained unrealised to the last. Not one military genius or nation, however mighty, has every succeeded in bringing the world under its sole domination.

There was another class of idealists who also dreamt of a world-order, but through peaceful methods of love and brotherhood, and the most outstanding representative of this group of pacifists is found in the personality of the Indian ruler Asoka, to whom the epithet “THE GREAT” is applied with greater appropriateness than what attaches to Alexander.

With brilliant military conquests to his credit, Asoka turned aside to religion which inspired him to an entirely different kind of conquest by peaceful methods. He did not seek to spread his religion with a sword in one hand and the *Tripi-taka* in the other. His aim was to found a world-order based on love and brotherhood and non-violence in thought, word and

deed. And for that purpose he sent out missionaries who would tell not only of the spiritual value of their message but also of the success which had attended Asoka's application of it to practical everyday affairs connected with the ruling of a vast empire.

This indeed was an unparalleled achievement. Asoka's political empire crumbled away as quickly as Alexander's but his spiritual conquest of the major portion of the then known world has suffered little or nothing and he is still the king of one hundred and fifty million hearts. Asoka stands alone in history as having ruled a great empire successfully with scarcely a case of resort to force and with an unwavering respect for the sanctity of human life.

Long afterwards, in the middle ages, the Christian missionaries founded certain religious societies to secure world peace, by preaching the doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man, e. g. "Brethren of Peace", "Confraternity of God". But in their attempts to realise the ideal of world peace, they sought to spread the suzerainty of the Christian church over the whole of Europe. The result was the birth of the Holy Roman Empire which Macaulay sarcastically describes as 'neither holy, nor Roman, nor empire'. The missionaries believed that the world would have peace only if there was a central power, according to them the Christian church, whom everybody should obey. But this autocracy of the church found little favour with the people and it gradually lost its power.

In course of time, the idea of a central power was replaced by the idea of a league of governments. In the fourteenth century Pierre Dubois in his book *The Recovery of the Holy Land*, suggested the establishment of an international court of justice which should settle disputes between nations by arbitration. Dubois further suggested that disobedience of the orders of this court should be punished by economic boycott. In the fifteenth century, the relations between different independent states came in for a good deal of attention and discussion. Emeric Cruce,

Sally and William Penn suggested in their writings the similar idea of a league of sovereign states to settle international disputes by arbitration. In 1710, John Bellers wrote a pamphlet emphasising the necessity of forming a league of European states.

But it was Grotius, a great political philosopher, who was the first to propound a system of international law, and since then the idea that a nation should observe certain rules in its relations with other nations gained ground. Several other thinkers suggested the formation of a confederacy of European states with a view to abolishing War. In his book *Perpetual Peace*, Immanuel Kant, the celebrated German philosopher, outlined a regular scheme of a League of Nations.

These suggestions, however, came only from idealist thinkers and philosophers who were not practical statesmen and who had no power to enforce their opinions. So it was not until the beginning of the 17th century that rulers of Europe took up the idea with anything like earnestness. After Waterloo, Russia, Austria, Prussia and some other powers entered into a league and named it "Holy-Alliance," for the protection of their dynasties and the prevention of any member of the Buonaparte family from occupying a European throne. This international organisation existed only up to 1830, but it demonstrated the value of co-operation not only in the political sphere but also in the social, and several social unions of international character were established. In 1899, a conference of European States was held at the Hague in Holland at the invitation of the Russian Government for the restriction of armaments and as many as twenty-six States sent their representatives. A permanent Court of Arbitration was established and its powers were confirmed by a second conference in 1907 at the same place, attended this time by representatives of as many as forty-two States, which further laid down that in case of disputes between two nations, a third party should mediate and also decided that international commissions of inquiry into such disputes should be appointed.

The progress of these international conferences for

achieving world-peace suffered a terrible set-back, however, when the Great War broke out and raged furiously for over four years—during which all talks of international amity were drowned in the roar of the guns. At the end of the war, when the peace treaty was made, a new organisation for securing world-peace—the League of Nations—was brought into being, largely through the initiative of the United States President, Wilson. Its basic principle was co-operation and not coercion. It also started a permanent Court of International Justice in 1920. But the judgment of this Court could not be made binding, nor could the League succeed in its attempts to make its constituent nations reduce their armaments. The reason was not far to seek. Nations could not change their hearts. In spite of the noble ideals of the League, the idea of internationalism was not accepted with any genuine regard for it and all along there remained a lurking suspicion in the minds of every nation that the other nations were secretly strengthening and increasing their military resources. Obviously such an atmosphere could not foster the growth of an international organisation for preserving world-peace. It had not completed even two decades of its existence when the second World War burst like a bombshell and destroyed what little had been achieved to secure international amity. But, though the life of the League of Nations was cut short, it was again revived at the end of the hostilities although under a different name—The United Nations Organisation, mostly on the same lines. The most important difference between the U. N. O. and the League of Nations is that “under the United Nations the rule of Unanimity, which has always been a fundamental principle of international relations as inherent in national sovereignty, has been abandoned for the first time. In transition towards this revolutionary change the Big Five (Great Britain, France, Russia, U. S. A. and China), have been granted in certain cases the right of Veto.”

This new organisation for international peace held its first session in 1946 and has since interceded in certain international

disputes, such as between South Africa and India, Netherlands and Indonesia, Pakistan and India but it has not yet made any definite progress towards the settlement of the knotty problems in any of these. Rather, the organisation seems to be divided into two hostile camps led by Russia on one side and U. S. A. on the other, and finds itself enveloped in the same unhealthy atmosphere of mutual distrust and suspicion which made its predecessor, the League of Nations unsuccessful.

When the western world was groping in the darkness of this foul atmosphere, unable to solve the conflict between nationalism and internationalism, a ray of light appeared on the Eastern horizon which, though dimly burning at first, grew bright enough to draw the attention of the world. Many apostles of peace, from President Wilson to M. Trygve Lie, have moved across the stage of the modern world perhaps with a more spectacular flourish—but few have wielded such tremendous influence on the history of our time as Mahatma Gandhi. Undoubtedly a great nationalist, Gandhiji was perhaps greater as an internationalist. He proved by his action that the two are not inconsistent or incompatible.

“My idea of nationalism”, the Mahatma said, “is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred here. Let that be our nationalism.” Elsewhere, speaking about interdependence of nations, he says, “I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity..... Isolated independence is not the goal of the world States. It is voluntary interdependence. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States, warring one against another, but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence. I

desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence."

There are many who sincerely hate oppression and brutality perpetrated by man on man. But Gandhiji broke with the old conventional methods and evolved an entirely different technique of fighting evil, national and international. This made thinkers and politicians the world over watch with genuine interest the application of the technique of truth and non-violence. It was not a mere theoretical proposition of a visionary and idealist but a practical measure employed with consummate skill by a far-sighted but straightforward, yet never unyielding diplomat, and not only in his long struggle on behalf of the Indians of South Africa but also, on an unprecedented scale, in his epic struggle for Indian independence ending in a glorious and bloodless victory. Slowly but steadily he emerged with the halo of a prophet of new India to whom the rest of the war-worn world, too, looked with hope for availing of his experience and insight in the solution of international problems. Unfortunately, at this moment of triumph, he was removed from our midst. But there is no doubt that his wonderful life of truth, purity and non-violence will continue to provide a permanent source of inspiration to earnest pacifists the world over.

There is nothing new, it is said, under the Sun. The principle of non-violence was practised by many organisations in the past in varying degrees, such as the Quakers in seventeenth century England, the Russian Dukhobor and Tolstoyans and the German Bible students. But Gandhiji showed that, making allowances for reasonable imperfections in actual application, non-violent resistance was capable of inspiring not merely the earnest members of a limited sect but whole communities or nations. It is true that this novel method was tested only against rulers who subscribed more or less to the basic principles of human civilisation. There are critics who doubt as to how it would have fared against those who take their stand on brute force and have little care for scruples natural to civilised life.

Brute force, however, has grown so enormous in its destructiveness and is daily forging such frightful weapons for mass-murder that even a Chenghiz Khan or a Caligula would have stood appalled at the sight of Hiroshima or Auschitz. A reaction seems already to have set in and people are wondering whether the world is not heading to its own destruction. Whether good sense will dawn upon the nations in time to save them from being engaged in an atomic war against which serious warnings have been given by prominent scientists, is still uncertain. But Mahatma Gandhi will surely go down in history as the greatest man of our age, who, with his prophetic vision, not only saw before most the ominous possibilities of brute force, but also discovered, and worked out on an unprecedentedly large scale, an effective alternative to it which has been welcomed as the greatest discovery of the modern century by Albert Einstein, Romain Rolland, George Bernard Shaw, and many other distinguished men all over the world. The editor of a German newspaper, *Na Zedt* recently sighed—"If we could cry 'Quit Germany'! Unfortunately Germany is not India and we have no Gandhi among ourselves".

"TH WILL BE DONE"

"तोमारि ईच्छा
होक पूर्ण ००
३००१०४८



Wood cut by Vinayak S. Masoji

THE GITA ACCORDING TO GANDHI*

By KSHITIMOHAN SEN

THE PATH OF THE UPANISHADS is the path to India's salvation. All religious sects, which derive their origin from Hinduism and which grew up in this country in later times, swear by three scriptures in order to prove their infallibility. These are the three great paths—*prasthanatraya*—of the *Upanishads*, *Brahmasutras* and the *Gita*. The *Upanishads* are, of course, the fountain-head and source of inspiration for the other two : the truth of the *Upanishads* were woven as the *Brahmasutras* and the substance of the *Upanishads* is to be found in the *Gita*. It is remarkable how, whenever truth has deviated from its course and ideals have fallen down, when the fabric of national life has been tattered into fragments and rendered weak thereby,—the truth of the *Upanishads* has been resuscitated and invoked to prevent disintegration.

When the impact of the Muslim onslaught threw India off her balance and everything went dark before her eyes—then, it was to the *Gita* that Vijnaneswara had to take recourse, to preach his liberal faith. This restored in South India a sense of coherence and homogeneity and this again enabled Samarth Ramdasa, Swami to awaken Sivaji to the vision of one India. It was in the *Gita* that the secret lay to compose differences between one sect and another. The *Gita* has thus delivered India from many a predicament through the ages.

When, through the advent of the English in India the first links of contact were forged between the cultures of the orient

* A review-article on the Gospel of Selfless Action or the *Gita According to Gandhi* being the translation of the original in Gujarati, with an additional introduction and commentary by Mahadev Desai. Published by the Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Price Rs. 4-0-0.

and the occident and in the resultant tension disruptions occurred in the Hindu fold, Raja Rammohun Roy, intent upon building up defences against threatened disintegration, held up the *Gita*-ideal before his benighted country. *Brabmasutras* were little known in Bengal outside the scholarly fold. Rammohun took upon himself the task of introducing the *Brabmasutras* to the lay people of Bengal through a translation of the *sutras* in the language of the people. The common mass of Bengal had, by that time, become completely oblivious of the existence of the *Upanishads*. The pundits knew about them but tabooed their message. When Rammohun commenced publishing the Bengali version of the *Upanishads* many thought them to be sastras of the Raja's own composition.

Through all these various ways, Rammohun strove to re-establish India's ancient contact with the lore of the *Upanishads* and their all-comprehensive vision. After him Swami Dayanand made an attempt towards Hindu revivalism by quite another method. He realised that the common mass would not easily understand the truth of a supra-sensual plane—they could therefore be brought together only through uniformity of ritualistic practice. The Arya Samaj established by the Swami bears evidence of what success he achieved in his task.

Seers and sages like Rammohun and Dayanand chose the path of religion to reach their goal of unity. In the meantime, under western influence politics had came to the fore. Organised political groups like the Hindu mela and Congress began gathering force. But politics was of foreign import and it could not stick root in the native heart and draw sustenance therefrom. It is therefore that the great of the ensuing generations headed by Tilak and Aurobindo, called the attention of the people to the *Gita* as a source of perennial inspiration in India's national resurgence. During a life-time spent in the prison-house, Tilak wrote a commentary on the *Gita*—which remains a marvel of erudition and occupies a rank all its own among the vast literature that has grown round this Celestial Song.

Although he had to plunge, perforce, into the turmoil of political movement in India, in his heart of hearts, Mahatma Gandhi was in the direct line of succession to India's seers and prophets. He too came to realize soon enough that if the binding force of religion was absent, then politics was so much driftwood caught in restless eddies and currents ; that if we lacked a deeper faith, mere struggle for political freedom would lead us to disaster. That is why he made an effort to spiritualize our national aspirations. The Mahatma is no more. His death brings home to us that politics without morality is but an empty word.

A glorious fruit of Gandhiji's effort to uphold moral values above political values—is his commentary of the *Gita*. The *Gita* of history is enshrined in the very heart and centre of a long-drawn-out fratricidal war. Mahatmaji's commentary of the sacred book, likewise, can best be understood against the back-ground of the selfish greed and the insensate frenzy of destruction which stalk the world of today. Now that science has been harnessed for working havoc and mass murder, this suicidal urge on the part of man will grow from more to more. If India is to resist this flood of annihilation she has to evolve some other method than the way of meeting violence with violence. Thus, by the cold logic of facts, Mahatma Gandhi came to re-discover India's traditional path of *ahimsa*. His premises were simple : greed develops a spirit of violence and greed is born of desire. Therefore, greed must be eschewed and the *Gita*'s ideal of selfless and 'desireless' action, upheld.

In order to make the *Gita* accessible to the common people, in order that the truth of the *Gita* might be reflected in their day to day life, Mahatmaji translated the divine book, 'as he understood it' into simple and colloquial Gujarati. But the commentary could not be confined to the Gujarati-speaking people alone. The need was great for spreading the message of selfless and desireless action, all over the world. Insistent demands were made for making the commentary accessible to every body.

It was in these circumstances that Mahatma's beloved disciple, Mahadev Desai, undertook this 'labour of love' of translating the Gujarati version.

Mahadev Desai was an intimate of Gandhiji ; he was therefore best fitted faithfully and accurately to present Gandhiji's ideas through an alien tongue. But he had little leisure to call his own and that prevented his giving undivided attention to the work. He did not, however, give up this sacred task ; his prison life during 1933-34 was entirely devoted to the work of writing and translating. If he had rested content with giving only a translation of Mahatmaji's meaning of the *Gita*, the work would have been completed long ago. He wanted also to give his own meaning and to share his understanding of the *Gita* with others.

Mahadev and I were friends of long standing. I can vouch from my personal knowledge of him that although exigencies of circumstances led him to the strange pastures of politics, deep in his heart Mahadev Desai was athirst for the life of a scholar and a literary man. When he started writing his own original commentary (which Gandhiji has described as an ambitious project), I had warned him that a scholarly treatment of his conception would entail immense pains and much exhaustive study. But the scholar in him did not wish to publish the thing somehow or anyhow, with the result that he did not live to see the book in print.

In view of the intimate personal relationship that subsisted between Mahadev Desai and myself, it is difficult for me to assess his work objectively. I shall just permit myself to point out some salient features from the portion entitled *My Submission*. Discussing the date of the *Gita*, he assigns the present text of the *Gita* to the fifth century A. D. As regards the author of the *Gita*, Mahadev Desai points out that it will be a mistake to suppose that Krishna is the Krishna of the *Mahabharata*. Krishna of the *Gita* is the Paramatman—the God of Gods. There were other Krishnas before the Krishna of the *Maha-*

bharata or of the *Bhagavat*. Krishna of the Yadava clan was but an aspect of the Krishnahood which came to connote "the ideal man". In page 10 of *My submission* is given a history of the *Gita*. From page 14 onward he deals with the relation of the *Upanishads* to the *Gita*. The description of the Universal Form of the Lord given in the *Gita* is reminiscent of the description of the Cosmic Person found in the *Mandukopanishad*; *Kathopanishad* makes *Atman* the master of the chariot of the body; the central teaching of the *Gita* is a synthesis and reconciliation of renunciation on the one hand and action on the other; *Brahmavidya* and *Upanishads* are synonyms; the *Gita* is the *Upanishad* of the *Mahabharata*. Dealing with the fundamentals of the *Gita* Mahadev Desai says that one of its most significant teachings concern 'that of God in all men'; the philosophy of the *Gita* is based on the *Sankhya* system; terms like *prakriti* and *guna* which occur again and again in the *Gita* are familiar terms of the *Sankhya* philosophy. Thereafter the introduction goes on to discuss the problem of *Karma* and rebirth.

In the following chapters Mahadev Desai gives an interpretative analysis of the 18 discourses of the *Gita*, paraphrasing the verses. This is followed by an explanation of the four *Varnas* and the doctrine of *Svadharma* in the light of modern outlook, and two highly interesting sections on metaphysical knowledge and the relationship between *karma* and free-will. A short chapter is devoted to the apparent but not real controversy between two eminent commentators—one ancient and the other modern, Sankaracharya and Tilak. Sankaracharya's emphasis on *Jnana* and Tilak's on *karma* was 'after all a question of difference in temperaments due to the different ages in which they lived'. "I cannot conceive them" says Mahadev "differing as to the ultimate ideal that the *Gita* sets before us". He then concludes his *Submission* with a summary of the teaching of the *Gita*. "The *Gita* says in one word," writes Mahadev "the ideal that we have to achieve". And what is that one word? "If you would be one with God acquit yourselves like men".

Only by working out our destinies as men can we work up to Godhood and there is no other way. The last few lines read almost like his own testament of faith : "Each one of us has to sacrifice ourselves, our petty and narrow and circumscribing selves in order to be one with the Self. We have to burn ourselves out with a heart and a will and a cheer each in his or her own sphere : Our wicks may be ever so flimsy, our oil ever so poor, our flame ever so feeble, just enough to light our narrow paths, but ultimately our dim lights will blend right enough with the Universal Flame. All sacrifice, no matter how small or great, provided it is pure, reaches Him, ranks the same with Him, there is no last or first."

These are poignant words coming as they do from one who gave his all in 'a spirit of complete self-surrender', and burnt himself out 'with a heart and a will and a cheer' in his own chosen sphere. His death in harness in the Aga Khan Palace was in itself an act of final submission to the Master's will.

Mahadevbhais *Submission* is followed by his translation of Mahatmaji's commentary of the *Gita*. The lucid exposition of the slokas given by Gandhiji in his characteristically simple and forthright manner, do not call for any great intellectual exercise fully to understand. A reverent mind, if it applies itself to the task with a spirit of goodwill and understanding, cannot miss the new light that Gandhiji throws in his interpretations. His reading of the *Gita* holds aloft a kindly light of faith and hope, of courage and action, in the trackless gloom that envelops the world today. The *Gita* to Gandhiji was "a spiritual reference book." It was his constant endeavour "to practice the teaching of the *Gita* as he understood it." Speaking about his commentary Mahatmaji says, "At the back of my reading there is the claim of an endeavour to enforce the meaning in my own conduct for an unbroken period of forty years." It is apparent, therefore, that his work of Gujarati translation was undertaken in no light-hearted manner nor in any spirit of heavy pedantry. An academic review of the book will, therefore, be not only out of place but

also an effrontery. Seen from the pundit's angle there are certain readings which are open to question. But then the high purpose which inspired the work and the noble spirit in which the work was done—render all scholarly argumentation useless and vain.

Mahadev bhai had in him the same spirit and the same purpose and, what is more, a life-time of intimate association had given him a deep insight into Gandhiji's mind and a true understanding of his thoughts. No wonder, therefore, that in his foreword, while speaking about the English translation, Gandhiji says, "I can vouch for its accuracy."

Nothing more need be said about Gandhiji's interpretation of the central message of the *Gita*. We can only hope that the ideal of 'selfless and desireless action' which the *Gita* taught him and which was made real in his own life and in the life of some of his nearest disciples, would leave humanity "purer, holier, nobler, stronger."

[*Tr* : K. R.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

The Dance of Shiva. By ANANDA COOMARASWAMI. Introduction by Romain Rolland. Asia Publishing House. 17 Gunbow Street, Bombay. Rs. 12-0-0.

We live in an age where the urgency of immediate problems makes us think of temporary solutions as the first essential. Taken in the nets of conflicting interests and ideologies very few have the freedom of thinking in the abstract about the purpose of life and the nature of society. It is often not without danger to his life and liberty that a man can try to keep aloof from the tribal interests which appear as the only moral code recognized by modern nations.

In this context Coomaraswami holds a conspicuous and privileged place ; he has been able to maintain the attitude of the true philosopher unaffected by the goods and evils of daily conflicts. It was a matter of regret that his works were so difficult to obtain in India. This volume we hope may be followed by many other Indian editions of his more important writings.

This one is a series of essays mostly published during the 1914-18 war. The change of time gives a further interest to the points referring to social questions which have somewhat evolved since. In his foreword Romain Rolland says : "In a series of essays which are apparently detached but all of which spring from the same central thought and converge into one design, the vast and tranquil metaphysic of India is unfolded, her conception of the Universe, her social organisation, perfect in its day and still capable of adaptation to the demands of modern times".

The subjects envisaged are : What has India Contributed, Hindu View of Art, That Beauty is a State, Buddhist Primitives, The Dance of Shiva, Indian Images with Many Arms, Indian Music, Status of Indian Women, Sahaja, Intellectual Fraternity, Cosmopolitan View of Nietzsche, Young India, Individuality, Autonomy and Function.

Coomaraswami analyses the creative process and the intellectual outlook which made possible the remarkable achievements of India in the field of all the arts : sculpture and architecture as well as music, love as well as politics, a process and an outlook which are often misunderstood and disparaged by western critics who make of Art a pseudo-religion

and yet are quite unable to perceive that true art is not distinct from religion. Western tendency has always been to create new creeds and new schools of art while forgetting that religion is one and all-pervading, and so is Art. Religion is not merely a Sunday leisurely occupation as contrasted with week days' solid work, and art is not a luxury unconnected with the vital necessities of life but they form the very context which must surround all our activities.

Coming to education Coomaraswami places great hopes in the experiments then made by Rabindranath in Santiniketan. In relation to present problems the remarks he wrote 30 years ago take a special interest. "A single generation of English Education suffices to break the threads of tradition and to create a nondescript and superficial being deprived of all roots, a sort of intellectual pariah who does not belong to the East or the West, the past or the future...of all Indian problems the educational is the most difficult." (p. 170).

To day we hear much talk about village reforms and village education, a thing quite distinct from efforts to remove the curse of poverty. It might be worthwhile to bear in mind that Ananda Coomaraswami did not hesitate to qualify the modern India of a quarter century ago as "a land of cultivated peasants and uncultivated leaders" (p. 178).

Many great events have taken place since these essays were written and some of the problems which appeared then arduous may vanish in a more congenial atmosphere. There are many of the views of Coomaraswami that all may not easily accept, but his picture of Indian civilisation is one of love and understanding which should prove most useful to modern minds so bent in finding the defects of the old order that they may fail to appreciate the marvellous and elaborate edifice that was and in many respects still is the civilisation of India.

At a time when most Indians abroad sacrificed their culture at the altar of the modern West, Coomaraswami, almost alone, was able to maintain the prestige of Indian civilisation as the source of all culture.

Now that a Free India is bent on making reforms to adjust the structure of the country to the needs of modern times we should deeply ponder and search our heart to see if we truly understand what Coomaraswami meant when he said "Hindu Society as it survives will appear to many to be superior to any form of social organisation attained on a large scale anywhere else and infinitely superior to the social order which we know as modern civilization." (p. 32). A close study of this book and of other works of Coomaraswami may furnish part of the answer to this question.

The Religion Of No-Religion. By FREDERIC SPIEGELBERG. Published by J. L. Delkin, Stanford, California. 133 pp + 14 full-page illustrations and diagrams. Five dollars.

This is a book of deep insight into the basic realities behind the religious experiences of the race and the content of age-old concepts like salvation and self-realization. What the author has attempted is a reinterpretation of fundamental truths which become obscured by association with out-moded forms of expression. To this task of reinterpretation he brings a wealth of knowledge of ancient religions as well as of modern philosophy; and he is often able to show how the findings of the latest Western psychology tally with the insights adumbrated in ancient symbols. It must have been a stimulating experience to the author, as it certainly is to the reader, to find the conclusions and methods of modern psycho-analysis anticipated by ancient systems like Taoism and Zen Buddhism. Indeed the author finds a demonstration of the general attitude he adopts, that of *non-religion*, in the theory and practice of Zen Buddhism. It is an attitude distinct alike from the denial of the *miracle of Being*, as in modern atheism, and from the limiting of it to particular places or persons, as in the dogmatic religions. "The Religion of No-Religion is the realization of the unrestrictedness of this miracle and therefore of an abandoning of all fixations and limiting statements. He who has entered into this super-religious state no longer believes in a system of theological knowledge and suspects every claim made in this direction." A continuous stream of witness, ranging from the Zen masters, through mediæval Hindu and Moslem mystics, to modern Western poets, is brought in to bear testimony to this essential kernel of religion.

This central principle of No-Religion, that of the wholeness of life, of the non-differentiation between the sacred and the secular, the author shows to have found expression in many an ancient ritual, myth and symbolism. Indian Temple architecture, e. g., embodies this idea, the Hindu temple being conceived not so much the abode of the god as his body, having its correspondences with the body of the worshipper himself, who in the full act of worship integrates himself with the god and the universe. Even ancient Alchemy is shown in its primal conception to have been a way of salvation, the goal aimed at being a transformation of the whole of life. Although alchemy is often ridiculed in modern days for its wild goose chase after the Philosopher's Stone, its underlying idea of total transformation of life, of matter as well as of spirit, belongs to the essence of all religion —the religion of no-religion.

Many telling diagrams, illustrating the conceptions of man and the

universe at various stages of human evolution, add value and interest to this book.

The present edition limited to 600 copies will we trust be followed by an enlarged printing of this significant book.

S. K. George.

Illusion and Reality. By CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL. Peoples Publishing House Ltd., Bombay. 276 pp. Rs. 6-0-0.

This undoubtedly is a classic work in the field of aesthetic philosophy, particularly poetics. The author is a man of genius whose premature death (in 1937 when he was only thirty) in an heroic action against the Spanish reactionary forces is a loss to the intellectual world. *Illusion and Reality* is a first attempt to work out scientifically a Marxist theory of art; English poetry with its rich and variegated history has been used as a factual illustration of the theoretical constructs. The latter should not be judged by any a priori method or prejudice and must be viewed as postulates whose truth-value is directly proportional to their capacity to subsume or explain the brute facts. That is to say, Caulwell's thesis should be given serious attention which every scientific hypothesis deserves; our opinions on Marxism and Russia should not shape our attitude towards this brilliant work.

It is impossible to do justice to this book in a short review like this. Caudwell's thesis may be summed up as follows: The root of poetry is economic and the various poetic developments can be explained by and correlated with the economic developments in a society. Dialectical materialism is the key to the understanding of the latter and, so, of poetry. Society, starting from a class-less stage, passes through higher stages of economic developments producing class-conflicts which ultimately lead to a class-less communist state. The variety of relations in which man stands to his fellow-man and to things directs his collective emotion. Poetry is the expression of man's aspirations, its content is the ideal (or the illusion) which plays a vital role in changing his environment (reality) and which, therefore, is not ineffective or unimportant. The earliest poetry, the harvest song, is the expression of a conscious economic relation of man to harvest. The harvest described and sung in poetry is no reality, yet it makes possible the real harvest. Man, unlike bees and ants, does not have an instinct for work, so it is "necessary to harness man's instincts to the mill of labour, to collect his emotions and direct them into the useful, the economic channel. Just because it is economic i. e. non-instinctive, this instinct must be directed". Poetry, through its words of emotional associations and rhythm and other

accessories, is the instrument that directs this instinct, and, so is economic in origin.

Old poetry directed collective instincts to work and so performed a social function. Modern poetry, starting from the fifteenth century in England, is capitalist poetry and is the expression of bourgeois idea (illusion) of freedom for which this class aspired. But true freedom is freedom for all and is possible only in a class-less society where there is no exploitation and where the necessary human relations are recognised and controlled. The bourgeois, by openly encouraging individual freedom, property-right, free-market and free labour, veiled the coercive social relations between the capitalists and the wage-labourers. Thus the bourgeois created a false idea (illusion) of freedom, and gave expression to it in their poetry. This freedom rests on individualism and ignorance of the necessities of social relations. Because it is a false idea its inner contradictions quickly appeared and sharpened—leading to a proletarian revolution, destruction of the private ownership of the means of production and of the coercive relation between the classes. Now with the state ownership of capital and the State control of production, consciousness and control of social relations have been possible and, so, genuine freedom has been realised (as in Russia). Caudwell traces the developments of English poetry from the Elizabethan to the present times and correlates them with the economic changes in the society which took place because of the very contradictions inherent in capitalism and the bourgeois idea of freedom. The future poetry of the world will be the expression of genuine freedom of the whole class-less society. The poetry will be vital, based on concrete living, and performing its social function to the maximum.

The author sharply departs from the idealistic and traditional theory of art as contemplative and apart from practice. For him all knowledge, which includes art and science, is a social product and is social practice; it is not passive mirroring of reality but active reacting on reality. Thus it is a revolutionary theory of art that Caudwell offers us and it is open to many attacks from the idealists. We do not attempt here a criticism of this work. We feel that much of our difficulty in accepting Caudwell's thesis is psychological rather than logical or scientific. No doubt there are many things in the book which are contrary either to reason or to fact (and which Caudwell himself might have corrected had he not died even before the publication of the book), nonetheless, it must be said that his central thesis, judged scientifically, stands. For it can explain, (though roughly, indeed) as no other rival theory, idealistic, materialistic or formalistic can, the flux of literary phenomena in a country.

Caudwell's writing is stiff and sometimes dense and obscure. His thought is quick and has a nervous energy which reveals an emotional temper underneath. But he does not indulge, like many devotees of Marx, in heroics. The book should be read and re-read by all interested in aesthetics.

P. J. Chaudhury.

Economics of Khaddar. By RICHARD B. GREGG. Revised Second Edition, 1946. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 212 pp. Rs. 2-0-0.

The book is a discussion of the question of economic validity of the Khaddar movement. It contains an exhaustive treatment of the engineering, technical and economic aspects of the Charkha programme and the philosophy behind it. The author has tried to prove by arguments and statistics that the Khaddar movement in India can re-establish a healthy balance between agriculture and industry and is the most fundamental and effective plan for relieving unemployment, increasing purchasing power in the hands of the people, reducing the real costs of production and the inequities of distribution and for maintaining a balance between production and consumption. He discusses the practical aspects of Khaddar, its ability to withstand competition from mills and the prospect of its becoming a permanent feature of the country. This is followed by an examination of the various objections usually put forward against the movement, its comparision with other reform schemes in the light of a new criteria other than money and price and of a new conception of machinery. The author finally assesses the advantages of an agricultural civilization over Western industrialism.

Mr. Gregg comes to the conclusion that the Khaddar movement is only one part of a world-wide change affecting the methods, organisation and purposes of industrialism. He tries to prove that khadi "is a mode of increasing the use of solar power from the current source of supply instead of from the stored sources of coal and petroleum" as well as a method of distributing the resulting wealth more equitably. The book incorporates several articles on the subject written by Mahatma Gandhi for the *Young India*.

The author has discussed the subject with a wider perspective in view. The book may therefore be regarded as a discussion of a special instance of the economic validity of all handicraft work versus power-machine industry. It was first published in 1927. Many of the statistics and references given in the book have therefore become out of date. That does not however detract much from the validity of the arguments put

forward. As a learned discussion of the economics of the khadi programme the book deserves to be studied by the supporters as well as critics of the movement.

J. P. Bhattacharjee

Non-Violence : The Invincible Power. BY ARUN CHANDRA DAS GUPTA.
Khadi Pratisthan, 15, College Square, Calcutta. Rs. 1-8-0.

This is the second, a revised and greatly enlarged, edition of the author's original essay on Non-violence, published in 1945. Writing as a confirmed Satyagrahi he asserts that non-violence is the only solution of the world's problems and gives historical precedents of its successful application to problems of government in ancient India under Emperors Asoka and Harshavardhana, and in resistance to tyranny by the Hungarians to the Austrian empire in the nineteenth century. In his enthusiasm for his doctrine the author fails to concede that these instances are too few and far between in mankind's long history to substantiate his thesis that non-violence is a practicable method in the securing and the maintenance of justice and ordered government. Writing before its signal success in India, he could not of course quote that; but the trend of his treatment does not warrant that he would have conceded the measure of goodwill on the part of Britain, under the leadership of a genuinely Socialist government,—he is supremely contemptuous of British Socialism (p. 79)—which certainly facilitated a peaceful transfer of power. If the book fails in one respect in commending the superiority of non-violence, it is in its lack of charity in its estimate of other efforts, equally genuine, to realize justice and peace on earth. This is most glaring in the author's wholesale condemnation of the Pacifist movement in Western countries. He points to defections from the Pacifist ranks of certain outstanding intellectuals like Bertrand Russell, but fails to take note of the many who, in utter obedience to their conscience and their religious convictions, suffered the loss of all things by total abstinence from war. Nor is India's adherence to non-violence as exemplary, as even with his reservations, he would make out. India's faith in non-violence is only now being tested and the events that have happened since the nation's attainment of independence are not such as to assure one that India will not fail in the test.

The author makes a great parade of arguments that are held finally to dispose of rival systems and to establish the truth of his own. But he has yet to learn that a profuse use of exclamation marks, and double ones at that, and the use of strong terms of condemnation, are not arguments.

However much he might wish to "brush aside as senseless balderdash" (p. 76) theories like Marxism, they deserve more respectful treatment. Nor are the limitations of Decentralism, which he poses as the panacea for the world's ills, admitted and itself presented with the insight and understanding that will carry conviction.

If the "argumentation" of the book is bizarre, the language of it is even more so. Not only are there mistakes in spelling and syntax, but the whole writing is untrue to the genius of the English language. A little more of Gandhiji's regard for truth and scrupulousness in making statements would have improved both the language and the arguments of the book.

S. K. G.

Manimekalai : (Second revised and enlarged edition). By A. S. PANCHAPAKESA AYYAR, Published by the Alliance Company, Mylapore, Madras. Price Rs. 2-0-0.

The book under review is a summary in English of *Manimekalai* one of the five celebrated Tamil mahakavyams or great epics, originally composed in the second or in the later part of the first century A. D., by the renowned Buddhist poet and theologian of the Third Sangam Age, Kulanikan Sattanar (also known as Sittalai Sattanar), a corn merchant of Madura, the Pandian Kingdom, once a famous seat of Indian culture in ancient Tamilnad. The summary is arranged into 22 chapters. The original consisting of 80 gathas or cantos, is a continuation of an earlier story in *Silappadikaram*, another great Tamil epic. A new addition is a brief summary of the various religious and philosophical systems which were then prevalent in the Tamil country. The author has rightly left out Canto 29—an omission not mentioned by him—which deals with Buddhist logic. According to many eminent scholars, it is impossible adequately to translate it. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Swaminatha Ayyar, the discoverer and first editor of the epic could not even annotate all the words in the poem. The summary of the other systems is lucid and easy of understanding to students of Indian philosophy. The author's introduction is helpful and the footnotes appended to the proper names—the historical places and personages—provide an additional source of information to students of South Indian history. The book will certainly enable the reader to appreciate the beauties of ancient Tamil literature.

In his introduction the author states that after the sack of Madura, Kannaki, the heroine of *Silappadikaram* had left for Murugan's hill in Palni and committed Sati in that place. But the *Silappadikaram* and its

Malayalam translation of Sri P. P. Narayanan Nair—brought out by the Cochin State Government—give us a different account. According to Chapter 23 of this epic, Kannaki had taken herself to the dominions of the Chera by travelling westwards along the banks of the Vaigai and entered Malanad or Malabar. She reached Neduvelkunram, or Thiru-Chenguntru, a hill near Kodungalur, the modern Cranganore in the Cochin State and after undergoing austere penance under the foot of a Vengai tree she ascended to the heavens. This strange incident was reported by the hillmen to Cheran Sen Kuttuvan, the ruler of Cheranadu or modern Kerala. This version of the story is supported by Adiyarkkunallar, the famous commentator of *Silappadikaram*, who lived in the 12th century A. D. (*Silappadikaram* with annotations and commentary by Dr. Swaminatha Ayyar, 4th Tamil edition). The hill Thiru-Chenguntru is known in Malabar as Chengunnu. It is situated near Chenganore, the well-known weaving centre near modern Cranganore. Palni is in Kongunadu near modern Coimbatore and it is not within the area of Malanad.

Manimekalai is a mine of information about Buddhism in ancient Tamilnad. Its message is one of religious toleration, compassion and the love of universal truth. For furthering the cause of cultural understanding, this epic should be translated into other popular languages of India. The author is to be congratulated for rendering such a valuable service to Buddhology and to Indian history by publishing this brief English summary of the great Tamil epic.

V. G. Nair.

Calcutta Statistical Association Bulletin, No. 1. August, 1947. H. Chatterjee & Co. Ltd., Calcutta. 48 pp. Rs. 1-8-0.

Rather a new-comer to the world of Societies and Associations, the Calcutta Statistical Association will perhaps be welcomed by all. It is mainly a society for the promotion of the study of, and conducting research in, statistics. It was started, thanks to the initiative taken by the members of the staff of the Calcutta University Statistics Department, towards the end of 1945 with the object of promoting the cause of statistics in post-war India in all possible ways. Within this brief period the society has extended its help and guidance to a number of organisations and individuals on statistical matters. The decision to publish bulletins off and on has been taken by the Association with the object of popularising statistics.

The first bulletin of the Association contains the following articles : Crop Estimation in India by Birendranath Ghosh, Survey of Public Opinion

by M. N. Ghosh, Misuse of Statistics by H. K. Nandi, Mental Tests by P. K. Bose and A Critique of the Pay Commission Report by S. Bhattacharyya. In addition, there are "Critical Reviews" of books and Reports, "Current News" and "Research Notes". The articles and notes in the first issue of the Bulletin may be said to be popular expositions of some aspects of Applied Statistics and as such serve to further the objectives of the Association. The bulletin, we are sure, will make a valuable addition to the popular statistical literature.

J. P. Bhattacharjee.

The Story of India : BY MULK RAJ ANAND. Kutub Publishers Ltd. Regal Building, Apollo Bundar, Bombay 1. 134 pp. Rs. 2-12-0.

Indian Cavalcade : By BHABANI BHATTACHARYA. Nalanda Publications. Post Box No. 1353, Bombay. 261 pp. Rs. 6-12-0.

Two fascinating little books on Indian history. Amid the plethora of calendar-like, dry as dust text-books, these two books will shine like emeralds. Mulk Raj Anand, the author of the first, is a well-known writer of King's English, though the present is perhaps his first essays in Indian history. He maintains here the individuality and charm of his English style, though his claim of this short history's being intended to provide "for children (of nine to ninety)" would be deemed rather pretensions. Seventy pages out of the total of 134 describe the cultural achievements of the Hindus, the succeeding twenty-eight pages, the Moslem rule and its achievement ; the British administration, sketched in only twelve pages, is over-simplified and so also the narration of the freedom movement upto August 15, 1947. The narration, reinforced by George Keyt's charming illustrations provides pleasant reading ; but pp. 102 and 108 smack of anti-British bias ; he blames them for the ruin of Indian trade and industries, and curiously enough, for the poverty and backwardness of the Indian moslem. Moreover some of his statements require correction : e. g. Amir Khusru was the father of Hindi and Urdu poetry, the assertion being possibly drawn from Nehru's *Discovery of India* ; Afzal Khan was a general of Auranzib ; Hastings bribed Mir Jafar to seduce him to the English side ; Bahadur Shah led the Sepoy revolt. With regard to the last two observations, let us tell outright that from 1751-1757 A. D., Hastings performed the duties of a merchant-clerk "appraising silk and muslin and copying invoices". Bahadur Shah was a *roi faineant*. The craven-hearted shadow-emperor, on hearing the uproar of the mutinous soldiery at the palace gate, sent for the English commandant of the palace-guard, and clutched at his arms, when he made

a move to go and meet the crowd, saying, "I won't let you go ; they are murderers, they might kill you also !" So weak and fatuous a monarch who was found hiding in Humayun's tomb at the time of his arrest was utterly unfitted to rule. We make suggestion for the correction of these inaccuracies and the amplification of the pages on British rule so as to indicate the Indian Renaissance, when the next edition is brought out.

Indian Cavalcade by Bhabani Bhattacharya is an anthology of historical essays beginning from Vikrama of Ujjain to Jalianwalabagh and Nehru's peroration, on the night of August 15, 1947. There is no organic unity in these essays, but the author by his fervid imagination and fine mode of expression, makes the dead past alive. The author's reading of Indian history is fairly wide, but some of his essays, e. g. *Intellectual tide over Bengal* seems to be too sketchy. The narrative is sparkling but is here and there over-weighted with frills ; e.g. "Destroy them, (Portuguese)", the Queen, (Mumtaz) ordered, and immediately writes the author, the army went into action. The matter was not so simple as that. (Vide *Bengal History*, Vol. II, recently published by the Dacca University). The description of Jahanara based on the fictitious *degh* story has besmirched a pure and noble character, such as is rarely met with in moslem zenana. The author's attention is directed to Sir Jadunath's fine historical essay on the same figure, *Jahanara, the Indian Antigone*, in the volume entitled *Aurangzib's Reign*, 142-54. pp. We recommend the wide reading of this book by school and collage students and their teachers.

N. B. Roy.

Poems of Lee Hou-Chu. Rendered into English by Liu Yih-Ling and Shahid Suhrawardy together with the original Chinese texts. XV+69 pp. Orient Longmans Ltd. , Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Rs. 3-8-0.

The history of Chinese literature boasts of at least one of its greatest poets who was also a King. This was Lee Hou-Chu (937-978 A. C.), the last king of a falling dynasty, but the most famous emperor in the realm of *Tsu*—a form of poetry similar to the English free verse. Traditional criticism in China deplored his inability 'to govern the state on horseback owing to his predilection to poetic reverie.' But, as regards his achievement in literature proper, praises have always been high.

China had to pass through a dark age during the time of Lee Hou-Chu. The political background was one of chaos and disaster. In the tenth century the vast empire of the great Tang dynasty was split up into ten independent kingdoms which fought among themselves for power and

supremacy, and one usurper succeeded another to the throne. All the big generals and ministers of the state made a regular work of liquidating one another in insensate jealousy. A state of protracted civil war raged all over the country for more than fifty years, in the course of which all sense of peace and security among the common people was thrown overboard. The rise and fall of kingdoms assumed the aspect of a mere stage-show with the curtain going up and down in a crazy fashion.

It is against this background of country-wide confusion that Lee Hou-Chu ascended the throne. Even before he had succeeded his father, six small states under his father's rule had to be surrendered to the Chow Kingdom in the north. The pressure from the north grew worse with the invasion of another foreign tribe, the Chi-tans or Tartars. They took sides with the contending kingdoms in order to advance their own self-interests. Thus, in the beginning of his reign, the kingdom of the Southern Tang dynasty to which Lee Hou-Chu belonged, suffered great diminution. It was limited only to the southern portion of the lower Yangtze valley and even this small kingdom was rendered weak and demoralised. Economically a kind of inflation took place, and, under royal proclamation one copper coin served the purpose of ten. Able men were rare. When the country required the sword-hand of strength, Lee Hou-Chu wielded but the frail brush of poesy. In the place of military counsel, he was fed with the sedulous praise of a handful of literary men of his court. Under these circumstances, nothing could save his Kingdom from its historically predestined downfall.

A background of the times as well as a factual account of the life of the royal poet, have been given in the Foreword. Naturally, his personality as a poet has received more emphasis. Lee Hou-Chu's poetry is tinged with the tragedy and frustration of his own life. In spite of all this, his personality emerges as that of a loveable and sensitive soul who worshipped beauty, but truth and goodness no less. The present volume contains thirty-nine out of the forty-five short poems which comprise his whole work. In all of them there is an unmistakable air of decadence, of softness, tenderness and helplessness of the most touching kind. His reverie of royal luxury is as real as his contemplation of the vanities and vexations of life.

True the age of Lee Hou-Chu was an age of war and bloodshed. It is equally true, however, that in the midst of this trouble and turmoil, the spirit of man won somehow for himself that portion of loveliness and immortality which is the poet's unique heritage. Kingdoms may rise and Kingdoms may fall, but words wedded to beauty and truth, live for ever. The fame of the brush thus outlives the infamy of the sword.

The English rendering is more or less faithful to the original and to many English readers, these exotic verses in classical Chinese may well prove to be a source of some new inspiration.

Hsu Hu

Jivanandanam of AnandaRaya Makhin : A drama edited By VAIDYARATNA M. DURAI SWAMI AIYANGAR, A. K. A. C., AYURVEDABHUSANA, AYURVEDACARYA., with his own Commentary—'Nandini'. The Adyar Library, Madras. Rs. 20-0-0.

Here is an allegorical Sanskrit play in seven acts which makes a bold attempt to embody the teachings of the Indian Medical Science. Through a triple agency of Medical Science, Dramatic Literature and concomitant methods of Advaita school of the Vedanta system of philosophy, the dramatist Ananda Raya Makhin seeks to expound the ways and methods for the undisturbed and peaceful career and existence of the Individual Soul (Jivatman). The various important diseases have been characterised as dramatis personae and the corresponding healing medicines for those, have also been suitably prescribed, during the course of the play.

The play is mainly based on 'santa'—rasa, similar to the other older allegorical plays like Krasnamisra's *Probodha-chandrodaya*, Vedanta Desika's *Sankalpa-suryodaya* etc. Our poet, living in a period of rich cultural renaissance of India under the patronage of Maharastra kings of Tanjore, has very appropriately inserted all the nine jewel-like poetic sentiments in various parts of this drama, and has coalesced the three golden plait of Medicine, Literature and Vedanta into this unique creation of his imagination.

Such a rare work of intrinsic merit was unknown to the majority of Sanskrit scholars. It was only in the year 1898 that the Nirnaya-sagara Press of Bombay published for the first time this medico-literary drama. The two learned editors of that press passed a prefatory remark that this work "does not posses poetic charm". After the lapse of a pretty long period a distinguished orientalist like Prof. Keith in his work *The Sanskrit Drama* p. 253, simply repeated the above remark when he stated, " *Vidyaparinay* and *Jivanandanam* have no merits." Such hasty and uncharitable remarks urged Pandit M. Duraiswami Aiyangar to bring out a reliable and really good edition of the work, and to exhibit the literary talents and taste of Sri Ananda-Raya Makhin.

With this definite purpose in view, the learned editor has utilised every available material and has spared no pains to prepare an all-round correct text. He has also very ably refuted the above-mentioned incongruous and

unfounded criticism, by exhibiting, in his detailed and comprehensive commentary 'The Nandini', the eloquent style, power of expression of thought and elevated poetic excellence of the work. It is quite certain that this newly revised, well-brought out, up-to-date publication will be a valuable collection from the treasure-house of Indian knowledge comprising Art and Science of the Seventeenth century A. D. We congratulate the editor on his laudable attempt and eminent success.

The Adyar Library is one of the foremost of the progressive publishers dealing in oriental works, and in course of their progress during the last forty years they have published some remarkable texts of Ancient India on various subjects. The volume under review adds considerably to the balance of credit in their favour. The work, as is usual with the other Adyar Library publications, is well produced. But how one wishes that the price were not so high !

Nagendranath Chakravarty.

The Depressed Classes. BY MOHINDER SINGH. Published by Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 213 + 40 pp. Rs. 7-8-0.

The book is a socio-economic survey of the Harijans of the Northern India and presented in a scholarly way by the author as his thesis for doctoral work. The work was undertaken by Dr. Mohinder Singh in the University of Lucknow under the able guidance of the eminent economist Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherji.

Divided in XI chapters, the first five deal with the nature and distribution of the depressed classes in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and U. P. The omission of Southern India, the real stronghold of the depressed classes does, by no means, take away the interest of the main theme, but makes the survey a little less arduous. The next five chapters deal successively with the standard of living, problems of debit and credit, social and economic disabilities, customs, beliefs and culture, and lastly caste organization and government. The concluding chapter deals with measures of social and economic amelioration.

In spite of the best efforts of Gandhiji, Harijans in India still remain social untouchables. Our knowledge about them is meagre, and our interest in their life and living is anything but deep and genuine. The book written with genuine sympathy makes an objective study, and presents facts which are bound to stimulate thinking. Very few of us are perhaps aware that there are over 5 crores of Harijans spread all over India, with a bare 1 per cent literacy, and a standard of living which is very much lower than the

minimum subsistence level. "Sad to relate, cases of mortgage and sale of husband and wife and bond slaves are frequent in Central India...and they live like the Negro slaves, bound hand and foot to the farmer". (pp. vii).

The task of reform is obviously an uphill one, and the book will have amply served its purpose if it arouses in its readers a sort of enlightened sympathy for the amelioration of a system which does little credit to our sense of social justice.

K. N. Bhattacharya.

Education in U. S. S. R. VORA & CO. Publishers Ltd., 3. Round Building, Bombay 2 : 50 pp. Rs. 1-4-0.

This is a tiny book of six pages of photographic illustrations and forty pages of clear-type literature. These days when India is trying to evolve her own National System of Education, books carrying informations from the wider world, are always welcome. The achievements of Soviet Russia in the field of her people's education had deeply impressed a discerning but unbiased mind like that of Rabindranath. *Education in U. S. S. R.* is sure to bring home to its readers important facts and data which have gone to make the educational system of Russia an object of world admiration. The concluding chapter on 'The Educational system in War-time' and the Appendix named 'Plans for Post-War Education' have really brought the book under review to a most up-to-date conclusion.

Nirmal Chandra Chattopadhyaya.

✓ *Soviet Literature and World Culture.* By TAMARA MOTYLEVA. People's Publishing House, Bombay. 24 pp. Rs. 0-6-0.

This is a short but pointed account of the characteristics of Soviet literary art. Art in Soviet Russia is neither naturalistic nor abstract and idealistic, it is a truthful and purposive depiction of the masses moving as masters of their destiny. The Soviet authors are one with the people and have a first hand knowledge of the social and political movements. Soviet literature has a rich human content, wide communication and a healthy function in society. The book is a thought-provoking and concrete exposition of the communistic theory of art.

P. J. Chaudhury.

Our Food Problem. By S. K. KELAVKAR, Barrister-at-Law. Published by the Author from Kolhapur Residency. With a foreword by Hon. G. V. Mavalankar. 63 pp. Rs. 1-0-0.

The author, ex-judicial minister, Kolhapur State treats the food problem from a new angle. He has pointed out, "the problem has always been treated as one of poverty and never been considered to be one of shortage". Much has recently been written on our food problem, and the trends of discussion seems to agree with the author's viewpoint.

The book, written in pre-independence days, will appear slightly out-of-date, and in the context of recent changes, can be usefully re-cast.

K. N. Bhattacharya.

Industrial Co-operation. By J. B. TAYLER. Published by Industrial Co-operatives Library, Bombay. 44 pp. Rs. 1-0-0.

The author of this booklet, Prof. J. B. Tayler of the Yenching University in China, has been closely associated with the movement for the promotion of Industrial Co-operatives in China. Within the small compass of this book, the author has very ably discussed the possibilities of industrial co-operatives in India.

India offers ample opportunities for the promotion of 'Induscus', and the contents of the book should, therefore, be carefully perused.

K. N. Bhattacharya.

Science : Our Newest Friend. By SHANTA BHANDARKAR. Padma Publications Ltd. Rs. 1-8-0.

The book describes briefly and in an interesting manner some of the important inventions of science, including those of medical and agricultural sciences. It is addressed to youngster's ; so, the subject-matter is dealt with simply, but the language is not always suitable for them. Some of the illustrations, which are pen and ink drawings, are good. The portraits of the scientists, however, should have been better and more life-like.

P. J. Chaudhury.

A SONG*

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

O my life's beloved !
Arduous art thou of realisation.
Of my heartfelt sorrow and my inmost feelings,
I shall say nothing
I shall only lay my life and soul
at thy feet,
and thou wilt understand.

Difficult is the path of life,
beset with thorns.
Silently will I go forward,
with thy loving image
enshrined in my heart.

Joy and grief, liking and disliking,
I shall scorn them all.
Whate'er thou bestowest upon me
with thine own hands,
that burden I shall cheerfully bear
upon my head.

* Translated from the original Bengali *kirtan* ओहे जीवनवलभ by Indradevi Chaudhurani.

If I have erred and thou canst not forgive,
then ordain more and more suffering for me
if such be thy will, beloved.

But cast me not away,
draw me to thy feet at the day's end.
For thou art all I have,
and the world is encompassed
by the shadow of death.

DISCOURSES ON BUDDHISM*

By P. C. BAGCHI

SECTION I

Buddhism and Ancient Indian Thought

BUDDHISM is at present followed mostly in countries outside India proper. This is just the reason for which attempts are often made to represent it as an exotic religion on the Indian soil. Buddhism no doubt was in its inception marked by a striking originality in its character but that is not enough to make it a non-Indian religion. In course of its later history we find many cases of conflict between it and other Indian systems but these conflicts are mostly ideological. They are in no way more accentuated than the conflicts that took place between other Indian systems of philosophy and religion.

Buddhism like all other Indian religions had its origin in ancient Indian thought. It is well known that the Vedic religion in course of its development gave rise to two different trends of thought. One laid emphasis on ritualism (*Yajña*) and believed that it was possible for man to induce the forces of nature to yield the desired objects through a sort of sympathetic magic. The other did not concern itself at all with the question of material gains but became engaged in searching for the highest metaphysical truth attainable for man. This latter trend of thought is developed in the philosophy of the Upanishads. Its culmination was reached already before the birth of Buddhism in the 6th century before Christ. It engaged the attention of all

* These are essentially some of the lectures delivered in Peiping in 1948 by the author as the first Visiting Professor from India to China—Ed.

great thinkers of those days, and brought about a religious ferment not experienced in any other period of Indian history. Buddhism like other contemporary systems is a product of this religious ferment.

Buddha accepted the philosophy of the Upanishads in its fundamentals. The Upanishads consider the world as unreal, full of misery to which the individual soul is bound down through the effects of its past action (*karma*). There is a higher reality, the Brahman, the Universal Soul. It is real (*sat*), it is full of consciousness (*cit*) and full of blissfulness (*ānanda*). When the individual soul liberates itself from the influence of the unreal world through the realisation of spiritual knowledge it becomes one with the Brahman and there is no more rebirth.

Buddha also considers the world as unreal and full of misery. He also believes that we undergo suffering through our own acts, through our own ignorance. It is ignorance, this attachment to the world of unreality, that brings about every time our rebirth. This ends only with the attainment of full spiritual knowledge which leads to the goal, the ultimate reality. Buddha only chooses a new word, *Nirvāṇa*, to define this goal. *Nirvāṇa* is like Brahman a state of reality, of complete consciousness and blissfulness. Buddha had only this important difference with the Upanishadic philosophy that he did not believe in the existence of an individual soul. What then constitutes the bridge between this life and the next? It is the five Skandhas. They are the subtle forms of five desires, of hankerings derived through the five senses. They are responsible for bringing about the next life. So long as they are not completely destroyed, this process goes on. In fact, even in this case there is no fundamental difference between Buddha and the teachers of the Upanishads. If we translate Buddha's words in the Upanishadic terms they would stand thus: The individual soul (*ātman*) and the Universal Soul (Brahman) are one and the same. It is our ignorance that brings about a sense of difference. This ignorance is the effect of our attachment to the world of unreality. When

this ignorance is destroyed we at once realise that we ourselves are the ultimate reality.

Buddha did not only accept the Upanishadic philosophy but also the Brahmanical ideals of religious life. Already before his birth an Indian ascetic order had come into existence. There were people who after abandoning their worldly life were living a secluded and ascetic life in the forests. They lived a simple and hard life, passing their time in spiritual exercises with a view to realising the highest truth. They were known as *Āraṇyakas* or forest-dwellers. It is this life that had attracted Buddha and induced him to abandon his palace and princely mode of living and to retire to the hills and forests of the country of Magadha. He wanted to realise the highest truth, the way out of the worldly sufferings by spiritual exercises in association with the forest-dwellers. The religious order which he founded was not different from the existing order of ascetics and the rules of discipline of both were the same.

Scholars are often in the habit of making Buddha a sort of social revolutionary, a person who revolted against the Brahmanical social order and the caste system. This is a complete misrepresentation of Buddha. Even according to the Brahmanical ideal, the ascetics are 'houseless ones' and are free from the influence of any social order. They are above caste considerations, otherwise they would not be fully houseless and free from the worldly ties. Buddha and his followers were not different in that respect. They were no social reformers.

In the Buddhist texts we often find Buddha attacking the Brahmins. These attacks are not directed against the Brahmin order as a whole but against individual Brahmins who had fallen from their high ideals. The texts are abundant to show that Buddha had equal respect for the order of the *Sāramanas* and *Brāhmaṇas*. He also spoke against the Vedic sacrifices which involved a large-scale killing of animals. Here he is one with the sages of the Upanishads. Vedic sacrifices were performed for the benefit of the nobles and kings with the avowed object

of getting material prosperity and not with the object of attaining the highest truth. The Upanishadic philosophy itself is a sort of reaction to it. Buddhism also was a reaction to it. In the later history of Buddhism when a Buddhist order of laity came into existence, there must have started some kind of conflict between the Buddhist and Brahmanical social orders. But that happened long after the time of Buddha. Buddha never thought of having anything but a monastic order.

It is also interesting to note that a number of legends concerning the life of Buddha is inseparably connected with the Vedic legends. In the story of the conception of his mother, we are told that Buddha entered the womb in the form of a white elephant. This white elephant in the Brahmanical legend really symbolises the god Indra who is also known as Sakra. In a large number of legends concerning his religious career Buddha is associated with this god Sakra. Of all the gods, Sakra stands nearest to him, follows him, and helps him in his religious missions. The weapon of Sakra according to the Brahmanical legend is the Vajra or thunder-bolt. The seat which Buddha takes in course of his spiritual exercise is called the Vajrāsana ; one of his meditative stages is called Vajrasamādhi. This association with the vedic legends becomes more apparent in the course of later history. Buddha becomes connected closely with another Vedic god—the Sun-god (Āditya). He comes to be known as Ādityabandhu, the friend of the Sun-god.

Thus the origin of Buddhism cannot be studied independently of the ancient Indian thought and religion. They are connected by inseparable subtle links and it is impossible to understand the real value of Buddha's contribution unless it is studied against the background of the Upanishadic thought and the Brahmanical ideals of ascetic life. Buddhism was far from being a religious revolt. It represented a normal and healthy evolution out of the ancient Indian thought.

SECTION II

Buddhism—the First Popular and Theistic Religion

The ancient Vedic religion was not a popular religion. It was confined to the two upper classes of the people—the Brahmins or the priests and the Kṣatriyas or the nobles. The mass of the people had no share in it. The Vedic gods, although many in number, were too abstract to be the objects of any special cult. They were personifications of the forces of nature but the personification was too elementary to be represented in concrete terms. That is the reason why they could not be represented by images. The Vedic ritual was more a magical performance than the worship of a personal god. It became later more complicated and could never satisfy the religious cravings of a simple heart. The philosophy of the Upanishads again was for the few who had attained a great spiritual height. It was a close preserve of the elites or the cultivated classes of the people.

Buddhism, within a century after the death of its founder, carried a message to the common people and that for the first time in India. Buddhism was then more than a philosophy. It had become a religion. This religion centred round the person of its founder, Buddha. He was originally a man, a man much greater than the gods. By his sacrifice, by his love for the suffering humanity, by his conquest of the evil (*māra*) and by his attainment of the supreme spiritual knowledge—the *bodhi*, he had even made the gods subservient to him. They were his torch-bearers, his pupils and flocked round him to listen to his instructions. Nothing could attract the imagination of the common man more. A prince, handsome, rich, and surrounded by objects of luxury is moved by the misery of the mankind. The sight of disease, old age and death with which men are overcome, upsets him and he chooses the life of the houseless in order to discover the Way by which all misery could be conquered. He throws away

his jewels, gives up his princely dress and puts on the monks' robe, cuts his golden locks with his own hands and goes out in search of the Way. He finds the Way after a long period of suffering and struggle and shows it to the people.

Who could be a greater saviour of mankind ? An abstract god of the old type, inaccessible to the common people, without any human qualities and incapable of feeling for them or a man like the Buddha with a human heart, full of sympathy for the suffering of mankind, ready to sacrifice himself for their good and superior to all gods by his conquest of the evil and attainment of holy knowledge ? It was the latter who won the heart of the people and became their idol. He became their object of worship, their sole refuge, their only saviour. The places sanctified by his former presence became places of pilgrimage, the *bodhi* tree which symbolised his holy knowledge and the *caityas* containing his holy ashes became objects of worship and his vestiges, the alms-bowl, the robe, the stick, the relics (*sarira*) etc. became the objects of veneration. He had not left his own image. The devotees could not venture to draw it from their imagination ; that would be a sacrilege. So they drew on the stone his foot prints or the *bodhi* tree as his symbols and worshipped those symbols. They freely depicted on stone the innumerable stories of his sacrifice in course of his previous lives to illustrate how he gave himself up for the good of others. They could not do the same with the Vedic gods of old.

Already in the time of Emperor Asoka (3rd cent. B. C.) Buddhism had undergone this development and had become a popular religion. Aśoka himself built stūpas in all places where Buddha had formerly travelled, he built *caityas* to contain the holy ashes, made pilgrimage to his birthplace, to the place of his *nirvāna* and the place of his *bodhi* and constructed railings around the *bodhi* tree to protect the holy tree better. Soon after him, on the railings of the great stūpas of Sanchi and Bharhut, the lay devotees depicted scenes of his previous birth and

represented him by his symbols : the footprints and the *bodhi* tree. They were anxious to have him in some concrete form.

But, anti-idol scruple soon disappears. Buddhism as a religion soon undergoes another change. The Gautama Buddha of Kapilavastu, the Sākyamuni, who had discovered the way of salvation for the suffering humanity and had won a position greater than that of all the gods, could not surely have been a mere man. He is essentially the cosmic Buddha, transcendent of the world of illusion. He is not subject to birth and death and is beyond the grasp of cause and effect. He is also immanent and with the world but we cannot find him in a concrete form with attributes. This is a Buddha of the Dharmadhātu the Dharmakāya of Buddha. Buddha the Gautama, born at Kapilavastu, is his human transformation, his Nirmāṇakaya. It is his incarnation and it is in this form that he comes down to show humanity the example of how to work for one's salvation. He goes through suffering, struggle, makes sacrifices but only to set examples. He himself is not affected by them. So, no sacrilege is involved in representing him in image ; he is essentially much more than that.

But the image cannot be that of an ordinary man. He can be represented only as an ideal man, a man with all the signs of greatness. These signs consist of what are called the 32 signs of a great man (mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa) with 80 kinds of subsidiary expressions. The painter and the sculptor are warned about these characteristics and they try to represent him accordingly. The Buddhist devotees now get their adored one in a more concrete form. This form, although it is like the form of a human being contains transcendental signs. The devotees do not mistake him for a common man.

Images of Buddha appear already in the 1st century B. C. Buddhist cult is henceforth well established. People of all castes or creeds, peoples of all nationalities—Greek, Saka, Yueche, Persian etc. in India, vie with one another in expressing the warmth of their devotion for Buddha. The number of caityas,

and Buddhist temples in India soon multiply. In this new cult there is no complicated ritualism. The devotee, in all simplicity, without the help of a priest goes out to worship the adored one in the temples or the caityas. He burns the incense, circumambulates the caitya, throws some flowers and mutters the name of the holy one. Offerings are humble, but that does not matter ; it is the devotion of the heart that is needed most in order to make the holy one the only refuge.

Buddhism thus became the first popular and theistic religion of the people of India. Buddha, the god as man became the object of a popular cult. This development of Buddhism did not go without a natural reaction. The Brahmanical religion which had kept itself aloof from the common man started working along the same line. They were anxious to preserve the national and social integrity. The country had become a prey to foreign rulers, specially the Greeks and the Yue-ches who had won the confidence of the people by adopting Buddhist religion.

The Great Epic of India (the *Mahābhārata*) composed in this period introduced a new god—Krishna Vāsudeva. He is essentially the great god of old, Viṣṇu who incarnates himself as a man. He is born as the son of Vasudeva at Mathura. He passes his young days as a cowherd in the woods, and in course of time plays his real role as a saviour of humanity and preserver of religion and society. He is the real hero of the *Mahābhārata*. The essence of this new religion is taught in the *Bhagavadgītā*, a portion of the Great Epic which gradually became one of the most popular of the regular religious books.

Henceforth the two religions go on vying with each other in capturing the mind of the people through their literature, songs, temples, sculptures and paintings. This competition brings a new *essor* in Indian life. Both, instead of ruining each other, go on prospering and creating what is still considered as best in the Indian classical tradition.

SECTION III

Hinayana and Mahayana

Scholastic controversies of latter times have led us to consider these two ways of Buddhism as mere schools opposed to each other. We have often thought that the Hinayāna represents more faithfully the original doctrines of Buddhism than the Mahayāna. As some of the first systematisers of the Mahayāna philosophy like Nāgārjuna and Aśvaghosa were of Brahmanical origin, we have often characterised the Mahayāna as a sort of Brahmanical reaction to the original Buddhism. We forget at the same time that some of the principal disciples of Buddha himself like Sāriputra and Kāśyapa were also of Brahmanical origin. The question of the relations between the Hinayāna and Mahayāna therefore ought to be examined more closely.

The two names—Hinayāna and Mahayāna do not appear in very early literature. In the earlier literature we find the names as Srāvakayana and Bodhisattvayāna. Sometimes we also get the names of three ways—Srāvakayāna, Pratyeka-Buddhayāna and Bodhisattvayāna. The Srāvakayāna or the way of the auditors requires the observance by the initiated one of all rules of discipline as laid down in the Vinaya. By the strict observance of these rules, by living a life of ascetism and by the practice of the four dhyānas, he gradually passes through three stages of spiritual development. These stages are Śrotāpanna, Sakṛdāgāmin, and Anāgāmin. Ultimately he reaches the stage of an Arhat. In this stage the causes of moral infection (aśrava) are exhausted, the impurities are washed away, the kleśas are rejected. He has fulfilled his task, laid down his burden, removed all bonds. He is no more subject to rebirth. He also attains a number of supernatural powers—abhijñā, ḥddhi, vidyā etc. The Nirvāna is his desired goal. This is the highest ideal for the Srāvaka. He cannot aspire after Buddhahood as that is attainable, according to him, by Sakyamuni alone in the present age.

But for one who is endowed from the beginning with

higher spiritual abilities the goal may be still higher. In the course of historical development of the religion, this became an accepted view. It was considered that Buddhahood was accessible to men placed higher up in the spiritual ladder. Sākyamuni worked for all the suffering humanity after the attainment of his Buddhahood. He preached his religion to all. But there may be others who would like to attain *bodhi* for himself alone. This is a Pratyeka-Buddha. He does not preach his religion. He does not sacrifice himself for the good of others. His spiritual powers are therefore inferior to those of the Great Buddha.

The legendary account of Buddha Sākyamuni clearly shows the entire process of the evolution of a Buddha. He had to pass through innumerable existences before he became a Buddha. In every existence either in the world of animals or in the world of human beings he lived a life full of virtues, full of wisdom and sacrifice for the good of others. By dint of these moral virtues and sacrifices he became a full-fledged Buddha. In his earlier existences he was a Bodhisattva. The stage of Bodhisattva is that of a potential Buddha. His striking characteristic is compassionateness, feeling for the misery of others and readiness to sacrifice himself for saving them from misery.

All the three classes of persons, the Śrāvaka whose ideal is Arhatship, the initiate for Pratyeka-Buddha whose ideal is Buddhahood for himself and Bodhisattva whose ultimate ideal is also Buddhahood, have to observe from the begining the same rules of discipline laid down in the Vinaya and have to attain the same kind of spiritual qualities. These qualities are usually seven in number—four kinds of *smṛtyupasthāna* or presentness of memory ; four kinds of *samyak-prahāṇa*, or application ; four kinds of *riddhi* or miraculous powers ; five kinds of *indriya* or mental energy ; three kinds of *balas* or mental powers ; seven *bodhyāṅgas* or constituents of *bodhi* and the eightfold path—*astāṅgika mārga*.

In addition to these, the Bodhisattvas are required to attain the ten perfect virtues or *paramitas* and pass through ten degrees

of spiritual progress or ten bhūmis. Thus they have to undergo a more difficult test than the others throughout their spiritual career. As compared to the Bodhisattva, the Arhat and the Pratyeka-Buddha are inactive and unpassionate. They concentrate on their own spiritual uplift. But those who have the capacity for undergoing greater suffering in life are Bodhisattvas. They are compassionate towards the whole world. They are active in order to be of help to the world.

This clearly shows that the Śrāvakayāna (or Hinayāna) and Bodhisattvayāna (or Mahāyāna) are not schools opposed to each other. They are complimentary to each other and complete the whole Buddhist outlook of spiritual life in a perfectly logical manner. They are steps in the same ladder of spiritual progress.

Historical considerations also confirm this assumption. It is idle to suppose that the so-called Hinayāna literature is older than the Mahāyāna literature. The main bulk of the Hinayana literature was compiled after the time of Aśoka i. e. after the 3rd century B. C. Some of the oldest Mahāyāna texts such as the Prajñāparamitāsūtra, the Vaipulya etc. must have been compiled before the Christian era. Nāgārjuna, the first systematiser of a Mahāyāna school of philosophy, the Madhyamika, appears as a commentator of the Prajñāpāramitā. The final compilation of the Āgamas, the Vinayas as well as of the principal Mahāyāna works belong to the same period. So the interpretation of the original doctrines of Buddha in the two literatures are equally authentic and almost contemporaneous.

The original Buddhism has to be discovered from a comparative study of the two literatures. The religion as practised by Aśoka in the third century seems to contain the germs of both the ideals. He speaks of the pāramitās, the uttaramanuṣya-dharma or the law of the higher men and of svarga that is heaven instead of Nirvana. Thus Aśoka's Buddhism was not quite the Buddhism found in the so-called Hinayana literature alone. This religion can be explained only with reference to both the Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva ideals.

The Buddhalogy of the Mahāyāna, viz. the conception of the various kāyas of Buddha, is also found in the Hinayana books. The Mahasaṅghika school is a Hinayāna school. The followers of this school already spoke of a transcendent Buddha or Lokottara Buddha. This is the same as the Dharmakaya Buddha. One of the schools of the Sarvastivāda, another Hinayana school, speak of the two bodies of Buddha, Dharmakaya and Sambhogakāya.

Hiuan-tsang, who saw the condition of Buddhism in India with his own eyes, speaks of "Mahāyānists of the Sthaviravada school". Sthaviravada was the most orthodox Hinayana school. That proves that even in the 7th century they had among them followers of Mahāyana. Hiuan-tsang also says that a school of Sthaviravada in Ceylon studied both Mahayana and Hinayana literature.

So in the normal state of things a complete Sangha consisted both of Mahayana and Hinayana. There were Mahayanists in the Sthaviravada school, and also in the Sarvastivada, Dharmagupta, Mahasaṅghika etc. all of which were Hinayana schools. It is therefore wrong to think that the two schools were opposed to each other. In fact they were not schools at all in the modern sense of the word but were modes of spiritual life, not opposed to each other but complimentary and within the same church.

SECTION IV

Place of Buddhism in Indian Life

In India Buddhism is at present confined to a small community in Chittagong (East Bengal) and to another in Nepal. Buddhism has not played any role in the history of India during the last eight or nine centuries as a distinct religion. Does that mean that Buddhism is dead in India ? Does that mean that India has forgotten one of her greatest sons—the Buddha

Sakyamuni ? Answer to such questions is bound to be both "yes" and "no". Buddhism as a distinct form of religion and the Buddhists as a distinct religious community, no longer occupy an important place in the Indian life. But Buddhist religion and thought still form an integral part of Indian civilisation. The form has changed but the spirit survives. India, inspite of her great respect for tradition, realised long ago that it was idle to cling to the same form through ages. That is the reason why many a time in her history old gods have disappeared yielding place to new ones and old thoughts have been interpreted and re-interpreted in new lights. It is therefore no wonder that Buddhism also had to submit to this historical process in India.

Buddha Sakyamuni is still regarded as one of the ten famous incarnations (*avatara*) of the God Vishnu. The most popular form of Hinduism which is known as Vaishnavism or the cult of the God Viṣṇu preserves many of the fundamental elements of the Buddhist cult. In fact it was Buddhism which influenced it the most in its rise and development. Buddhism had become in course of centuries a theistic cult in the hand of the people. The historical Buddha had become a personal God to his devotees. It was the belief that by having complete reliance in him, by muttering his name, remembering him and worshipping him, one could attain salvation in the highest heaven. This transformed Buddhism at once, and for the first time in India, into a popular theistic religion. A Hindu reaction to it brought into being the cult of Viṣṇu. The highest God Viṣṇu incarnates in the time of national distress as man and comes as a saviour of humanity. Krishna, the hero of the Great Epic of India (*Mahabharata*) is an incarnation of Viṣṇu. He is a God in the form of man like Buddha and thus becomes the object of popular worship. This new and popular cult was almost a replica of Buddhism and in later times when Buddha was accepted as another incarnation of Viṣṇu, the fusion of Buddhism into this new religion became complete. The two cults

went to form one popular religion. Thus it has come down to us and thus it still dominates the religious life of the Hindus.

The most popular system of Hindu Philosophy is the Vedanta. It was systematised by a great Hindu scholar named Saṅkaracarya who lived in the 7th century A.D. It has often been said that he was responsible for the destruction of Buddhism in India. On the other hand he has been attacked by his contemporary philosophers as being a "Hidden Buddhist". Both these statements are true. His philosophy, although it is a new interpretation of the ancient Vedic philosophy, is in many respects a new system of idealism. It considers the phenomenal world as an illusion (*maya*). The knowledge of this world is a relative truth. The absolute truth is attainable by the highest form of knowledge. It is undeniable that this philosophy is fundamentally the same as the Vijñanavada system of Vasubadhu which considers the world as an illusion and views reality only from a relative point of view. The Vijñanavada system indicated the highest development of the Buddhist philosophy. By assimilating it into the Hindu system, Saṅkaracarya did exactly what the Song philosophers did in China. Buddhist philosophy has lived and come down to us in its Vedantic transformation. It is in this form that it is exerting its deep influence on the people of India.

In its last days Buddhism gave rise in India to different forms of mysticism, the most important of which was Vajrayana. It makes use of mystic symbols (*mudra*), mystic formulae (*dharani*) and mystic practices for the realisation of the highest ideal. It also brought into existence a highly complicated pantheon of divinities which symbolises the various aspects of nature. This mysticism was taken over by Hindu mystics only with slight alterations. So what was formerly called Buddhism only changed its name.

Buddhist mysticism exerted a great influence on the religious teachers of medieval times who initiated what is known

as the *Sants* movement. It was mystic as well as devotional. Some of the famous leaders of this movement were Kabir (14th cent.), Dadu (16th cent.) etc. Like the Buddhists they did not believe in caste system. Many of the teachers actually belonged to lower classes. Their teachings were highly influenced by the earlier Buddhist mysticism.

It cannot be denied that the modern intellectual renaissance of India has been characterised by a renewed study of the Buddhist lore. During the last three quarters of a century scholars have been paying greater and greater attention to the study of Buddhism, publication of the old texts, discovery of the new ones, and recovery of the lost ones from Tibetan and Chinese sources. It was clearly understood by them that a real history of India can never be written unless the various stages in the development of Buddhism were discovered from a fuller study of the ancient literature. In the curriculum of most of the Universities at present there is a place for the study of Buddhism, Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist literature either in Pali or Sanskrit.

The two great men of India, Tagore and Gandhi have been deeply influenced by the philosophy of Buddhism. It is Buddhist humanism which attracted Tagore almost since the beginning of his literary career. Many a touching Buddhist story is found in the scheme of his poetry or drama. The spirit of sacrifice, the love of humanity, the absence of distinction between man and man--these are the great Buddhist ideals which find their echoes in the writings of Tagore. In his own educational institution, Santiniketan, the poet used to officiate personally at the common prayer on the anniversary of the Buddha's Nirvana.

Gandhi, the great apostle of the doctrine of *ahimsa*-non-violence-has once again insisted, just as Buddha did, on the effectiveness of this creed. It is not a weapon for fight with him but a matter of real conviction. Asked what he would do in front of a snake with raised hood to bite him, if he had a

stick with him, he is said to have replied, "I would throw away the stick and stand calm in front of the aggressor".

The teachings of Buddha therefore still play a great role in the life of India. It does not matter if it does not live as a distinct and dominant faith of the people. The spirit has never died ; it still moves the heart of the people and guides their intellect more than it had done ever before.

NATURE AND SOCIETY IN GANDHIAN ECONOMICS

A CRITIQUE*

By JYOTI PRASAD BHATTACHARJEE

IN NO OTHER branch of science, perhaps, are the fundamental principles so often and so seriously questioned as in Economics. In fact it would not be an exaggeration to say that modern economic theory has emerged from the ashes of the Classical and the Neo-classical theories and the modern doctrines representing the views of the English, American and Austrian Schools are, in their turn, now facing the challenge of the Marxist theorists. The very development of Economics has thus been through a process of questioning and negation. One is naturally tempted to compare it with the trend of human history and call it "dialectical."

The latest challenge in the ring of Economics may be said to have come from no less a personality than Mahatma Gandhi. Slowly but steadily a school of opinion inspired by its founder has established itself on the soil of India. It has now become a fashion to call it the Gandhian school and its set of ideas, doctrines and principles as Gandhian Economics and Philosophy. One of the ablest exponents of this school is Dr. J. C. Kumarappa whom Gandhiji used lovingly to call as "the Doctor of Village Industries" because of his association with the All-India Village Industries Association.

Dr. Kumarappa's recent contributions to Gandhian Economics are his three books, *Why the Village Movement*, *A*

* A review of the following books by Dr. J. C. Kumarappa: *Why the Village Movement*, *A Plan for Rural Development* and *Economy of Permanence*. Published by the All-India Village Industries Association, Wardha, 1946.

Plan for Rural Development and the *Economy of Permanence*. The booklets outline the general principles underlying the village industries movement and seek to evaluate them in the broader perspective of a quest for a new economic order. Emerging from the prolific pen of Dr. Kumarappa, these embody the results of his researches into the structure and fundamentals of the ideal society. The books are therefore interesting and at the same time important. There is a lot of originality about them as will be evident from the blessings Gandhiji has showered on two of them. What then is the Village Movement ?

THE MOVEMENT

The aim of the movement, in the words of Dr. Kumarappa, is the establishment of an economic order based on "cultural values and human needs which formed the foundation of the old Oriental Civilisation". In the book *Why the Village Movement* he examines the chances of attaining such a state of progress. The purpose of the book is explained very clearly by Gandhiji in his foreword with the remark that the author "answers almost all the doubts that have been expressed about the necessity and feasibility of the Movement".

The Movement draws its inspiration from life and its processes as seen in Nature. It is therefore aimed to relate man back to Nature. That is why Dr. Kumarappa begins by tracing the progress of man through the different stages of evolution and the different types of economic organisation. The various forms of human activity are classified according to the predominant motive-force that shapes them into four characteristic schools of economy under the names : Predation, Enterprise, Gregarianism and Permanence. This is stated to be the order of evolution. Mankind has now moved forward from the second to the third stage. In other words human society is now in a Gregorian state and as yet far from the ideal state of Permanence.

The modern situation in the world, at present under the

influence of the Gregorian economy, is analysed from the economic point of view. The evils and inequities in the modern world are traced out through a discussion of subjects like people's income, natural order of supply and demand, function of work as means of wealth distribution, moral issues of riches, the place of women in the creation of demands, and international strife. The ills of the modern society are diagnosed as due to the centralisation of production. This has led on the one hand to Capitalism and to Communism on the other. The former has in turn given rise to excessive accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, search for raw materials, overproduction and hunt for markets ; while the latter has resulted in the concentration of power in the hands of a single class. Both Capitalism and Communism, Dr. Kumarappa holds, are based on a consideration of material values, on the supposed existence of the mythical "Economic Man" to the utter disregard of the human factor and the effects of culture. All these have bred a false standard of values and led to poverty, exploitation and war. The Gregorian economy is therefore essentially violent and contrary to nature.

Finally Dr. Kumarappa comes to the question of the solution, the remedy for these ills and puts in a strong plea for a non-violent economic order as the only means for achieving international peace and security. The goal of an ideal economic system, according to him, should be the most efficient creation of wealth, wide and even distribution of it, satisfaction of the needs of the people before comforts and luxuries are catered for, full development of the personality of the worker and promotion of peace and harmony in society. Achievement of these purposes will require a planned economy, the characteristics of which would be decentralisation of the bulk of production among villages, use of machinery only when hands fail and where workers are not displaced, resort to large-scale centralised production only in the case of key industries and public utilities which will be operated on a service basis under collective or

State ownership. In addition, there will be the adoption of the system of barter exchange in order to do away with the injustices perpetrated under the money economy and the introduction of a system of vocational or 'basic' education aimed at the development of the personality of the worker. Such an economy, holds Dr. Kumarappa, will ensure the achievement of the ideals set forth above. The standard of life will become essentially non-violent, fixed as it will be not in terms of artificially created wants, but by the amount of *real* income. Such a society will necessarily become village-centred and approximate to the ideal of "cultural" as distinct from "functional" democracy. The author concludes with the remark that this principle was recognised in ancient India and the society that was evolved is still now the nearest approach to real cultural democracy.

The necessity and feasibility of the village movement are thus explained and sought to be justified. The movement, though essentially Indian in nature and origin, have thus got an appeal much beyond the borders of India, in fact of any country. Let us then turn to the planning of such a society and analyse the views of Dr. Kumarappa.

A PLAN

A Plan for Rural Development comes as a natural sequel to the book *Why the Village Movement*. The booklet embodies the practical implications of the principles outlined above. It contains summarised texts of two speeches delivered by Dr. Kumarappa at a Conference of Popular Ministers held at Poona in 1946 and a Memorandum on Governmental functions drawn up by him for discussion in that Conference together with a copy of the resolution passed thereat. The booklet seeks to give an idea about the approach to be adopted in the matter of planning for the country and the nation.

The *aim* of planning in India, according to Dr. Kumarappa, should be the satisfaction of the natural, as opposed to the

artificially created wants, or, in other words, a parity between production and consumption based on self-sufficiency of each village in food and clothing. The plan will have to be essentially non-materialistic and must depend for its operation on the utilisation of the tremendous labour wealth of the country and not on the investment of enormous capital. The vast population of India will therefore constitute the *means* of planning. The *medium* will be an economic system in which money would lose its importance and eventually be eliminated. Such a plan will require for its execution a truly democratic State or a Republic of villages and selfless, responsible personnel. These are the *political* and *administrative* aspects of planning for a non-violent order, a peaceful world.

An examination of the plan proper will reveal that the author has scrupulously tried to prevent every form of localization of industry and concentration of productive power. The plan is divided into two parts ; one part dealing with cultivation, storage, marketing, etc., and another with village industries. The former part receives by far the major part of the emphasis. Some of the important features of the plan may be noted here. Cultivation will be planned and licensed for the purpose of satisfying the dietetic needs of the people. Agricultural activities of the Government will be directed towards improving food crops as well as raw materials for village industries rather than encouraging the growth of money-crops like tobacco and raw materials for factories like thick-rind sugarcane and long staple cotton. Extension of irrigation facilities and distribution of improved seeds will be among the responsibilities of the State. Manure-making and grain-storage will be among the functions of the village. Conservation of land and water resources and of the raw materials will receive a very high priority. The industrial policy of the State will be directed towards encouraging cottage and village industries. Several measures have been recommended for resuscitating decentralised industries like paddy-husking, flour-grinding, oil-pressing, *gur*-making, bee-keeping, leather-

tanning, soap-making, paper-making and pottery. The policy of the State in respect of livestock, forests and roads will be directed towards increasing the prosperity of the village.

The plan may be characterised as a sort of co-operative endeavour to ensure a rational development of man and society. There is considerable emphasis on co-operative organisation. Multi-purpose co-operative societies will be started in villages to look after and satisfy the economic needs of the people. These societies will carry on transactions in kind, so that money may be relegated to an unimportant corner of the rural economy. The State has been assigned limited functions to be performed through democratic means. Thus the present policy of discrimination in railway rates in favour of industrial products will have to be abandoned, and freights, priorities and international trade handled by the State in the interests of consumers and village industries. Further, a parity between the prices of agricultural and industrial products will be maintained through a system of suitable controls. In short, everything will be harnessed to secure a balanced development of agriculture and industries and ensure distribution of wealth even in the process of production.

A PHILOSOPHY

That is the Plan. What about the people and their standard of living? Not much has been written except that their 'natural' wants will be satisfied. But what actually will be reckoned as natural as opposed to the artificially created wants? This brings in a question of philosophy. How will the life of man be guided? To what purpose will his self be directed? And finally what will be the scale of values?

Dr. Kumarappa tries to answer these questions in his booklet *Economy of Permanence*, by following up the point of view presented in *Why the Village Movement*. He seeks to

present a positive outlook, a perspective that will suit the genius of the Indian people. The word, permanence, in the title of the book refers to conditions within the limits of time and space. In the words of the author, "what men of religion term 'eternal life' or 'union with the Godhead' has been interpreted in relation to the everyday life of man in the title of this book as the Economy of Permanence." The booklet is a quest for relating our spiritual and inner self back to life. Gandhiji characterises it, in his foreword, as "plain living and high thinking".

Man is a part of Nature and human life constitutes a stage in the natural order of evolution. Life and living in Nature are therefore treated in detail and the different types of economies like Predation, Enterprise, Gregation and Service, found operating there, outlined. Though man is but a member of the animal world, a distinction has been sought to be made between his way of living and the animals'. Human ways of living should be neither parasitic nor destructive, neither competitive nor violently collective, but non-violent, co-operative and based on service. Dr. Kumarappa tries to establish these points through discussion of questions like use and misuse of free-will, stages of development of individuals and nations, characteristics of each stage, valuation and scales of value, life, living and existence, work and division of labour. From nature he comes through man to societies and nations and proceeds to describe the permanent society in the ideal stage of development.

In this final stage which is described as the economy of permanence, the scale of values adopted will be spiritual, and moral valuation of things will replace the present monetary standard. Sublimation of the self will be the guiding principle in society and the function of work will be to provide the body with energy, health and rest. The norm of life and living will be such as to bring together as a living organism the various sections of society in healthy co-operation. Dr. Kumarappa comes to the interesting conclusion that "self-interest is the only incentive in nature for creatures to extend their co-opera-

tion" and that "socialists are going counter to bountiful nature and their methods will spell violence in the long run."

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Dr. Kumarappa has provided much food for thought in these books. There is much to know and learn from his studies. It is doubtful, however, whether he has been successful in removing all doubts about a Gandhian economy. Space does not permit even a reasonably thorough examination of his views. Reference is therefore made only to a few of the controversial points.

Everyone will agree with Dr. Kumarappa about the need for a Village Movement. It is true that if government is to be by the people, it must reach down to the meanest village. But what will be the structure and fundamentals of such a society and government? The views of Dr. Kumarappa, as indeed of other members of the Gandhian school, on this subject may be broadly summarised as : (a) opposition to both capitalism and communism, (b) opposition to centralisation of production and the economic system consequent on the use of machinery, (c) faith in the principle of trusteeship, (d) belief in simple ways of life and a moral scale of values, (e) emphasis on the development of individual personality, (f) motto of non-violence, and (g) faith only in a decentralised Government. Some of these principles, it is obvious, are meant for the individual self, while the others relate to the social pattern. Leaving aside the former for reference later on, let us now turn to the societal form.

Dr. Kumarappa's opposition to capitalism is quite understandable. After all, capitalism is an out-moded and hideous system, a relic of the barbaric age. Even a capitalist economist of Lord Keynes' renown denounced the principle of capitalism as "dependence upon an intense appeal to the money-making and money-loving instincts of individuals as the main

motive of the economic machine".¹ Opposition to socialism is however not so easily understandable. The reasons advanced are that it destroys individual initiative, leads to centralisation of production and results in violence. The bone of contention is therefore the use of machinery which leads to centralised production and economy. Here members of the Gandhian school will find several thinkers to support their views. Thus Professor Karl Mannheim holds that increasing industrialization implies "functional rationality" and does not, to the same extent, promote "substantial rationality".² About centralised socialistic economy and its supposed failures, Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* has now become almost a Bible to the anti-socialists. Dr. Kumarappa's analysis of socialism and its working in Russia can therefore be called at best second-hand.

The only ground for rejection of socialism then amounts to opposition to what has come to be known as "Technocracy". It is now recognised that technocracy demands ever bigger production units and more centralised economy. This is however partly true. If coal and steam can be replaced by hydro-electricity the advantages of centralisation may cease to exist. Even the staunchest of technocrats will then say, "let us now have small production units decentralised within country". After all, a mere chance has associated technocracy with centralisation ; and it is a historical accident that steam was invented and put to use before electricity, specially hydro-electricity. It is therefore quite likely that the increasing use of electricity and development of potential water power will bring about changes in the technique and organisation of production, which will meet with the approval of both the technocrats and the advocates of decentralisation. A question may naturally be asked : "Does decentralisation in itself constitute a positive step forward and lead to a 'non-violent economic order'?" The answer does not appear so simple as Dr. Kumarappa and the Gandhi-

1 Keynes : *The End of Laissez-faire*.

2 Karl Mannheim : *Man and Society*.

ites seem to make out. The history of Japan which industrialised itself almost within half a century, mainly through the development of decentralised industries, obviously belies such an expectation.

The main point therefore is how the economic system will be organised and what will be the motive force behind it. Dr. Kumarappa does not advocate any group organisation or corporate body. He places the greatest of emphasis on the individual who will be guided by a principle of "service", in other words, "trusteeship". But trusteeship is at best a double-edged principle; it cuts both ways. It is true that it can be placed on the philosophical sieve and can be shown through analytical washings as an approximation to the socialist ideal. But this will, after all, be an exercise in mental philosophy, having no relation to the world of reality. Trusteeship, it must be remembered, is as old and out-moded an institution as capitalism, and as usual the past, inspite of its miserable failures and glaring defects, always appears with a halo of romance. It may not be out of place here to mention that Rabindranath Tagore had to revise towards the end of his career some of his ideas about State functions and the benefits of the system of social trusteeship which prevailed in our country in the past.⁸

The system that Dr. Kumarappa pleads for is in effect a mean between capitalism and communism, a mixture of private enterprise and State ownership in suitable proportions. Whether such a combination is possible or desirable can of course be doubted. The golden rule of the *via media* evolved by the ancient Greeks may well have solved many conflicting problems; but that does not prove its efficacy as a permanent method of

8 This will be apparent from a comparative study of the political and the social philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore as outlined in his books, "Swadeshi Samaj" (1904), "Call of Truth" (Satyer Ahwan in Kalantar 1921), "Manusher Dharma" (1931) and "Russiar Chithi" (1992). In "Russiar Chithi" Tagore is no longer apprehensive about the State and its role in society and wants to assign to it all the responsibility for the welfare of the people, because he has been by this time disillusioned about the "glorified" benefits of the principle of trusteeship which governed our rural society in olden days and was the source of strength, so to say, of the structure of this Swadeshi Samaj.

solution. After all society is dynamic and it is difficult to lay down any definite formula which will hold for all time to come, specially in the case of a compromise. The problem may therefore well arise of the degree of centralisation and socialism finally allowable under such a system. Obviously the needs of efficiency and speed as well as equity may demand more of State control and ownership than are envisaged under the plan, without however involving any conflict with the other aims. The point may be made clearer by taking a concrete example. In a decentralised productive system operating in an "Electricity" economy the individual producers will be able to produce much more than their own, or their village requirements. In that case will it be in the interests of the State and the people to leave this surplus productive power in the hands of the individual producers, or to socialise the entire productive capacity? There can be no doubt about the answer.

Let us now turn to Dr. Kumarappa's rural plan. The plan is in a sense very modern and scientific because the approach to the target is essentially nutritional. The peculiarity, rather the novelty, of the plan lies in its nature. It differs from the plans drawn up by bodies like the National Planning Committee in respect of simplicity and inexpensiveness. There is no attempt to estimate the costs of the Plan. The reason is perhaps to be sought in the intention of the author to minimise the need for a money economy. Whatever that may be, the fact remains that every plan has its cost side, irrespective of the money economy. In considering the pros and cons of any plan, its 'real' costs measured in terms of sufferings and sacrifices should always be taken into account. While on the subject of money economy, it will be worthwhile to mention that an attempt to do away with it is pretty sure to meet with failure and very likely to be fraught with dangers. So long as there is a price-system—and such a system will always be there—the mere elimination of money from trade and transactions in rural economy will result in an undue pressure on the rural

society. It will amount to beginning at the wrong end. The parity between the prices of agricultural and industrial products will be disturbed and the peasants and farmers will be hard hit. Obviously rural economy cannot be isolated and put in a water-tight compartment. The experience of Soviet Russia, where an attempt to eliminate the money economy proved unsuccessful in 1929-31, sounds a note of warning for all barter enthusiasts. It is true that money cannot be allowed to become the master of the economic system, it must always remain its hand-maid. But the measures necessary for this purpose are to be sought otherwise than by its elimination.

The most commendable feature of the plan is its emphasis on the individual and his standard of living. The plan centres round the farmer and rural economy first, and then radiates to the rest of the economy of the country. The criticism of the Gandhian school that it puts all the emphasis on village industries to the exclusion of the most important rural craft, viz. agriculture, no longer holds good. But questions again arise when we come to the topic of decentralisation. The plan is formulated on the assumption of utilisation of the labour wealth of the country and not on the basis of capital investment. On principle this sounds almost ideal. But in a decentralised economy operating on the basis of regional self-sufficiency, any improvement in the technique and efficiency of production (which, for example, may result from the use of electricity) is likely to create the problem of over-production, or alternatively unemployment and under-employment. This tendency will always be there so long as the productive capacity and means are privately owned and managed and not socialised ; in other words, so long as the functional relationship of labour and capital and the importance of each are not clearly realised and set forth. This in a sense is the greatest weakness and defect in Gandhian Economics.

The plan may therefore seem unreal to some extent. This apprehension is increased by the fact that there is no attempt to fix up a time schedule for its operation. To eyes accustomed

to elaborate and expensive plans, the target may also seem very modest. Self-sufficiency in food, clothing and other necessities sounds too small an objective. The extremists will perhaps say that it amounts to planning for an enforced poverty. But this raises the question of philosophy to which now we shall turn.

Dr. Kumarappa's thesis on the Economy of Permanence is based on analogies from nature, on parallels he draws copiously from the ways of life as seen in the environment. Such an economy will be based on the reformation of the individual and the distillation of the qualities of man. Whether the philosophical and spiritual man will be able to gain so much of ascendancy over the economic man remains however a debatable point, at least when we consider the fact that life is a continuous struggle for existence and that the world is too imperfect, full as it is of oppression and suffering.

It is true that if a moral scale of values is adopted, satisfaction of natural as opposed to the artificially created wants becomes the ideal of the economic system. But which wants will be termed as natural and which as artificial? Obviously the terms are relative and their contents will vary according to the prevalent standard of living and the stage of progress of the society. It is a well known fact that as living standards improve, luxuries come down to the category of necessities. It will therefore be difficult, if not impossible, to define the natural and the artificial wants. Further, the economic system would have to be continually changed as more and more wants are "naturalised."

Coming to the individual we find that his role in such an ideal society will undergo phenomenal changes. He will be given full scope for self-development; but he must transform himself into a 'self'-less "self" through a process of sublimation. Thus will the violent animal that is in man be transformed into a non-violent angel. It strikes one's eyes, however, when in the same breath it is said that socialists are going against nature in as much as "self-interest is the only incentive in nature for creatures to extend their cooperation." This conclusion seems

to be rather contradictory to the principle of sublimation of the self, which will guide life, living and existence in the permanent economy. A doubter may well ask, "Will this principle guide only the mental and moral activities of man? Will it not affect his economic self specially when service becomes the mainspring and motto of his work and action?" Obviously he cannot live as an 'ego'-centric individual in the economic field and simultaneously continue to act as a 'selfless' man in other spheres.

CONCLUSION

All the three books of Dr. Kumarappa are, however, full of original thinking, explained in simple and unorthodox style. As expositions of a new approach to economic and social planning, an attempt at a re-valuation of economic philosophy and a plea for the establishment of a non-violent order of society, the books have an appeal, not strictly limited by the boundaries of any country.

Does anything stand out from all these discussions, if the books are left aside? If anything, the conclusion seems to be that the choice before us now is between a socialist order and a Gandhian order. It involves not only a choice between two "means" to achieve more or less the same end, but a decision regarding "ends" also. The world is now passing through one of the worst periods of trouble and turmoil and it is difficult to make a right choice at the right moment. As between the two alternatives, however, the former seems to be coming, as some Marxists will say, in the 'natural course of history', while the latter sounds unreal and religiously utopian to some extent. But history cannot be relied on to act for us. And if through our inaction we drift on towards the third alternative in which we are finding ourselves, more or less, at the moment, human beings in a not distant future may well become the museum specimens of a bygone age. Let therefore economists and politicians ponder and decide.

DAUD AFGHAN

THE LAST INDEPENDENT AFGHAN SULTAN OF BENGAL, BIHAR AND ORISSA

By N. B. Roy

II

Daud versus Munim

WITH THE CAPTURE OF TANDA and the distribution of fiefs, the Mughal conquest of Bengal was all but complete ; but at this hour of Daud's adversity, the Afghan national resentment blazed forth on all sides. Kalapahar, Sulaiman, and Babui Mankali rose in arms in Ghoraghat ; Mahmud Khan, son of Sikandar Shah Sur, in Salimpur within the sarkar of Mahmudabad. These risings were quelled after hard fighting by Majnun Khan Qaqshal, and Raja Todar Mal.¹ Muhammad Quli Barlas, who was deputed against Daud, advanced south and occupied Satgaon. Daud retreated south-west towards Jalesore. His chief Hindu adviser Sri Hari, father of Raja Pratapaditya, now parted from his patron and struck towards the deltaic region of the Sundarbans where he carved out the principality of Chandican.

After these rapid victories, the Mughal officers thought that the enemy was crushed and consequently became slack in operations against the Afghan king. They now bent their attention to "taking ease in the country" and making gains for themselves. But among this ignoble set, there was one man in whom the fire of devotion to duty burnt undimmed. He was Todar Mal. Rigidly orthodox in his habits, he daily worshipped his tutelary deity in the seclusion of his tent ; yet his loyalty to his Moslem master was unflinching. In course of the chase

1 Vide Beveridge III, 169-71.

of Daud, he had advanced from Satgaon to Mandaran, (8 miles due west of Arambag town in Hugly district) and pitched his tents there, when he received the news of Daud's preparations. Promptly reinforced by Muhammad Quli Barlas, he felt strong enough to resume the march and advanced to Kolia, (Gwalior of *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*) 23 miles north-east of Midnapur, but another powerful enemy now appeared in the direction of Birbhum, menacing the Mughal base at Mandaran. To meet this threat, the generals countermanded the march against Daud and turned towards Birbhum.

Throughout the middle ages, Bengal's frontiers were repeatedly overrun by hardy horseman operating across Jharkhand. Soldiers of fortune often seized the crown of Bengal by bold sallies from that direction. An Afghan condottieri, Junaid, son of Imad Karrani, now wanted to repeat this exploit. Nephew of Sulaiman, he had fled the court at Tanda in 1566 and obtained a jagir from Akbar at Hindau, 71 miles south-west of Agra. In 1572 he incurred imperial displeasure and joined the rebels at Gujarat. Here he won for himself a very high position, by his enterprise and ability ; commanded the centre in the battle of Pattan, January, 1573. After the Mughal victory he again fled to the Deccan, from which place he returned to Jharkhand by the end of 1574. Here he recruited a force, beat the Mughal captain Yar Muhammad Khan and caused such commotion that Raja Todar Mal and Muhammad Quli had to suspend hostilities against Daud and direct their arms against him. They marched back into Burdwan and succeeded in scaring him away into the jungles (of Birbhum) but during the halt at Mandalpur² possibly Mangalkot in Burdwan district.

² Certainly not Midnapur, as stated in *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh* and in the *History of Bengal* vol. II. p. 190. According to Nizam-ud-din, Raja Todar Mal and Muhammad Quli had to put off the campaign against Daud for chastising Junaid. Accordingly they retreated from Kolia and turned towards Birbhum, obviously by the route across Mandaran and Burdwan. After scaring away the Karrani chief, they halted at Mandalpur which is no other than Mangalkot of Burdwan district, site of later engagements between the Afghans and the Mughals.

Muhammad Quli Barlas died after a short illness. The Raja returned to Mandaran but found the army unwilling to accept his leadership. One of the commanders Qiya Khan Gang chafed against the ascendancy of the viceroy Munim Khan and declared his intention of quitting the army and returning to the capital. The Raja had to purchase his co-operation by gifts and largesses.

Meanwhile there was great stir among the Afghans. Daud had mobilised his resources and got together a large army, presumably out of such hardy and fighting elements of Orissa and Mahisyas and the Bagdis of the Midnapur district who in recent times (1942-43) rose *en masse* against the British authority. The news of Daud's preparedness reached the emperor who directed the Bengal viceroy to take the command in person. Munim complied with the emperor's command by joining the army at Chitwa (in the Ghatal subdivision of the Midnapur district). But he found the troops in a state of utter demoralisation. As Abul Fazl says, "Many of the officers and common soldiers were from folly and cowardice disinclined to fight and wanted that there should be some kind of agreement (with the enemy)." The army's nightmare was the route of march. The way lay through a waterless lonely tract covered with dense *sal* forest and the report of Daud's having barricaded it at many points made the Mughal army panicky.

The viceroy summoned a war-council and heartened the officers to action by adopting an alternative route of march. This was discovered by the scouts and the general so successfully executed the march that before Daud was aware of their nearness, the Mughal army had turned his flank by bursting upon Nanjura, 11 miles east of Dantan. Truly does Akbar's friend and court-chronicler record, that by this single step "all Daud's plans for fortifying the roads were made in vain"; for, while the Afghan bear crouched in his lair at Garh-Haripur, (south of Kesiari in Midnapur district), for a spring upon his adversary at a suitable moment, he found his own position menaced. He

was now forced to advance and give battle to his great adversary.

The clash of arms took place at Tukaroi, miscalled Mughalmari, on account of the heavy slaughter of the Mughals during the initial stages of the battle. An obscure place in Dantan thana, it lies on the Bengal-Orissa trunk road ; the river Suvarnarekha meanders a mile west of it ; 8 miles north of it is the village of Mughalmari, while 3 miles north is the village of Dantan, containing ancient tanks and the temple of Syamaleswar, a stone bull with broken forelegs still squatting in front of it and looking sphinx-like, across the centuries.

This was the site which on the 3rd of March, 1575 became the scene of violent fighting and decided the contest between the Afghans and the Mughals for supremacy in India.

The battle begun with the discharge of artillery from the Mughal side. Some of the elephants on the Afghan side were shot down by this fire. But as soon as the artillery shock subsided, the large body of elephants in the Afghan van, camouflaged in yak's skin and tail, charged upon the Mughals. At the sight of these terrific monsters, the Mughal horses shied and stampeded upon the rear which in its turn was driven upon the centre. In the effort to stem the tide of Afghan attack, Mughal commanders like Khan-i-Alam fell. Munim himself was wounded and fled nearly six miles off from the battle field. With the van, rear van and centre rolled up into a bewildered mass of screaming and flying men, the day seemed lost to the Mughals. What happened was the opposite. The Afghan van under Gujar Karrani, after breaking the Mughal centre, sighted the Mughal camp at a distance and plunged with his horde of followers into it. The Mughal right and left yet stood the ground but they were broken in spirit. A capable general would have immediately smashed them by an overpowering attack all along the line ; but Daud mistook Munim's precipitate flight for a ruse and did not issue the order for a general offensive.

Meantime while the Mughal camp was being looted by the Afghans and their right division wavered on the field, Todar Mal, who commanded the Mughal left, bravely held his ground against the repeated Afghan onslaughts and sent forth the clarion-call to his troops saying, "What matters if the Khan-i-Alam is dead ; why fear if the Khan-i-Khanan has fled ; who lives if His Majesty's force is defeated". While Todar Mal kept the flame of contest alight, the broken remnants of the Mughal centre took courage and began to form themselves. Suddenly an arrow was shot from one of these formations. It struck the Afghan leader Gujar and killed him.

The tide of the battle now turned. The news of Gujar's death reached the Afghans and a shudder ran through the whole line. Daud did his utmost to steady the troops. He propped up the right wing under Sikandar, brother of Khan Jahan, but the latter broke away. Alone he kept up the fight and gave way only when he found the combined offensive of the Mughal right and left overwhelming.

Such was the battle of Tukaroi, as described by Abul Fazl and Badauni. Munim won the day and signalled his victory by erecting "eight sky-high minarets with the brainless heads of the Afghans".

The victory was not, however, as great as it is depicted to be. The Mughals suffered heavy casualties in the early stages of the battle and the name stamped upon the place in the neighbourhood of the battle-field, testifies to it. Secondly, Daud staggered again to his feet within a surprisingly short period and was up in arms when Todar Mal had advanced as far as Kalkalghati in Cuttack district. In this predicament Todar Mal again summoned his chief, bed-ridden at Dantan, to his aid. The old warrior mounted a litter and joined the army with all haste ; he drove forward until he reached the bank of the Mahanadi, where his path was barred by the Afghans.

For centuries Cuttack was the capital of the Hindu kings of Orissa. It stood at the apex of a triangle the sides of which

were formed by the rivers Mahanadi and Katjuri. Its natural defences had been still further strengthened by the construction of the fort of Barabati by Mukunda Dev, the last Hindu king of Orissa. Daud relying upon the strength and security of the fortress, hurled defiance at Munim. The Mughal general had advanced into the recesses of a broken and jungly country, with high hopes of dealing out the crushing blow to his adversary but he now found it a task entirely beyond his resources.

It was the month of April ; the river Mahanadi was no doubt fordable at places during this month but Munim had not brought the materials of the siege ; so the storming of the fort was out of the question. On the other hand, there was the prospect of his line of communication's being cut off, with the commencement of the rainy season when the many streams and channels would be flooded with water. Indeed the odds against him were many, in case he determined upon the siege of the city. As the author of *Seir-ul Mutakberin*, assessing the defences of Cuttack, two centuries later, remarked, "should any enemy attempt to besiege the place...and the siege should chance to be protracted until the beginning of the rainy season, he would find it difficult to subsist...Independently of that, the country round this island is very difficult ground...so intersected by rivers and torrents that an enemy would find it impossible to reach the end of his journey..." It is not strange that in the face of such circumstances a tried general like Munim hastily concluded peace on the 12th of April, 1575 and departed for Bengal.

From the writings of Abul Fazl, however, the impression has gained ground among the historians that Daud "laid his sword at the feet of Munim in the durbar tent at Cuttack" and made an abject surrender.⁸ A different story is told by Badauni. According to him, the initiative for peace came from Munim and Daud was accorded an honourable reception. As Daud proceeded, says Badauni, "with the pomp and grandeur like that of Solomon" towards the durbar hall, Munim advanced half the

8 Vide Beveridge III, 184.

way in order to receive him "and practised with the greatest humility and respect all the ceremonies of reverence", on meeting Daud. The latter, on his part, took off the sword from his belt and holding it before the viceroy said, "since it causes injury and affliction to personages like you, I have no mind for soldiering anymore". Unabashed, Munim clasped him in his arms; they then took their seats on a cushion and talked with great cordiality. The meeting was followed by the exchange of presents and the signing of the treaty by which Daud condescended to acknowledge himself as a vassal of Delhi.

During the intertude of Munim's absence in Orissa, the Afghan chiefs scattered all over Bengal and Bihar rose, as if by a common impulse, to retrieve the Afghan cause. Bahadur Karrani of Rhotas, Haji and Ghazi of south Bihar, Junaid supported by Adam and Yusuf Batni, Dariya Khan Kakar, Jalal Khan Sur, Taj Khan and Sulaiman Panwar of north Bihar backed by Fath Khan Musazai and other Afghan chiefs threw the whole of Bihar into commotion, while Mankalis carried every thing before them in north Bengal, capturing Ghoraghat and Gaur and driving back the Qaqshals to Tanda. Hurrying, the viceroy came from Orissa and turned his arms against the rebels of north Bengal whom he succeeded in defeating at a point opposite Tanda. The tide now turned: the Qaqshals taking courage recaptured Ghoraghat.

Providence however had not decreed rest for Munim. The rainy season was at hand; with Junaid Karrani hovering with his columns on his left flank and the Mankalis unsubdued on the right, the Mughal general had to take measures for cantoning his army during the fearful rainy season of Bengal. Tanda was a newly grown-up city without adequate defences. So the decision was taken of removing the army during the monsoon to the ancient but deserted city of Gaur whose fortifications were still standing.

Throughout the ages one of the allies of the Bengal kings has been general rain, like the general snow of Russia. Daud

had counted on it in his stand at Patna. Akbar had defied it and won. But Munim was trapped by it. The polluted water of the old city and the poisoned air of the marshes in the neighbourhood combined with the scarcity of supplies, caused an epidemic of cholera, of which officers and men died like flies. Munim was compelled to reshif to Tanda but the strain was so great that after a fever of only ten days, he himself sank to death on the 23rd October, 1575.

Daud, who was lurking in his lair at Cuttack, returned once again to the fray and opened his path to Gaur by expelling the Mughal commanders from Bhadrak and Jalesore. Isa Khan of East Bengal defeated and drove back the Mughal admiral Shah Bardi from Sonargaon ; the Mankalis ousted the Qaqshals from Ghoraghat. Hounded from all sides, the demoralised Mughal soldiers came streaming towards Tanda. Meanwhile Shaham Khan, who was elected to lead the imperial army after Munim's death, could not control the various elements who thought of nothing else than to get away with all their ill-gotten gains. Condemning this ignoble crew, Abul Fazl remarks : "The whole soul of those paltry-minded men was engaged in carrying the acquisitions out of that country while outwardly they said—when we have put the river between us and the enemy, we shall give our minds to fighting....But when they crossed the river Qutlaq Qadam produced a lying letter, (about the death of Akbar). Those friends of pelf and foes of fame used this false statement as their credentials and went off towards Bihar by way of Purniya and Tirhut. They gave up such a fine country without regarding it."

Daud versus Khan Jahan

Thus Daud as quickly regained West Bengal as he had previously lost it. Akbar, in order to save the situation, transferred the veteran warrior Husain Quli Khan *alias Khan Jahan* from the Badakshan command to Bengal. The general started on his

March about the middle of November and by quick marches intercepted the retreating army on the environs of Bhagalpur. The troops were utterly shattered in spirits "on account of the refractoriness of the people (of Bengal), pestilential atmosphere and large mortality". Khan Jahan brought them back to a sense of duty, and, seconded by them, made forced marches. They knocked at the gates of Garhi before its commander Ayaz Khakshail could put it in a posture of defence. Yet the latter put up a fight and was slain with 1400 of his men. After capturing Garhi, Khan Jahan pushed forward to Rajmahal which was naturally a fortified place, being bounded by a chain of hills on one side and the Ganges on the other and erected his tents there ; while his antagonist encamped beyond a *nala*, possibly no other than the Undhuah, which, in a later age, gained celebrity for deciding the day between Nawab Mir Qasim and the English.

Khan Jahan was at the head of a very fine army, yet he distrusted his ability to force his way through the Raj Mahal pass in the face of Daud. As the latter also shirked an engagement, a deadlock ensued. The tension was, of course, kept alive by clashes between the scouts and tussles between isolated parties. As time passed in inaction, Daud increased in daring. His roving columns began to interfere with the flow of supplies to the Mughal camp. Once again appeals were sent to the emperor for reinforcement and supplies.⁴

Never before had the Mughal prestige sunk so low in eastern India. One army had been shattered, its commander had perished ; another army was entrapped. The flames of rebellion were still ablaze in parts of Bihar, while in Rajasthan a violent pitched battle was impending between the chivalry of Mewar and the Emperor of Delhi. Under the impulsion of these events, the faithful vassal Raja Gajapati Shah of Jagadishpur, who had previously participated in the capture of Hajipur, now rose in rebellion. He entered into an alliance with Daud and by closing the line of communication with Delhi across the

⁴ Beveridge III, 289.

Chausa ferry, planned to crush the Mughals by pressing in upon them from opposite sides. The Raja of Arrah routed the faujdar of Arrah on land and water, so that Akbar was forced to commission another force under Shabhaz Khan against him, during April-June, 1576. Daud now felt strong enough to probe the strength of the Mughal line of defence ; one of his generals Ismail *alias* Khan Jahan made an assault upon the Qaqshal entrenchment but fell in the encounter. Yet the Mughal general was more solicitious for help than before, and in response to his wishes, Akbar decided to take the field in person and proceeded to Birar, one stage beyond Fathpur on the 22nd July, but the decisive battle, which was finally to close the contest between Daud and the Mughals, had taken place ten days previously.

Battle of Undhuanala

The manner in which this battle decided the issue bears resemblance with another battle which took place near the same site about two hundred years later ; in both the cases the offensive was taken by fording the nullah. In 1765 this was done by Adams with the help of a deserter from Mir Qasim's camp ; on this occasion this was done by the Mughals with the help of their own scouts. Whether Qutlu Khan, Daud's commander had an understanding with the Mughals at this stage, it is difficult to say. According to the *Akbarnama*, the imperial army marched along the edge of the hills skirting the Ganges until they reached the nullah brimming with water. There was no chance of crossing it, when luckily a ford was detected ; the Mughal left stealthily got across it and suddenly flung themselves upon the Afghan right. They were twice rolled back by Kalapahar, Daud's commander who was wounded in course of the fighting. Led by Raja Todar Mal, the imperialist hordes came in wave after wave and overwhelmed the Afghan right. Meanwhile the Mughal right that had advanced groping for the enemy in another direction closed with it at a certain point. Junaid Karrani who had been wounded

in the preceding night by a cannon ball showed remarkable leadership by directing his army from a *charpoy*. But fate went against the Afghans. Junaid was killed. The Mughal van under Murad Khan also crossed the nullah and became engaged with Khan Jahan, the Afghan commander. He twice threw them back and was about to be overwhelmed by the combined attack of enemy vans, front and rear, when Daud veered to his support. All was not lost yet. Victory could yet be wrested from the jaws of defeat, but a viper among the Afghans that Daud had nursed himself, now darted its fangs at him. This was Qutlu Lohani who had assumed the sole direction of the affairs of Daud, after the exit of Sri Hari. According to *Makbuzan-i-Afgana*.⁵ Qutlu had entered into secret negotiation with the Mughal general and had planned the overthrow of his own king in return for the grant of the latter's territories to him. During this critical stage in the battle, Qutlu in accordance with the previous compact "turned his face to flight with all his troops. The legions of Daud, witnessing Qutlu's perfidy and perceiving the state of things quite changed, were instantly excited to flight".⁶ Qutlu's treachery is also vaguely alluded to by Abul Fazl: "the battle had not yet reached the centre, when the light of the crescent of divine favour illuminated the world".... Again, he says Khan Jahan "had gone in search of the foe when the battle-field became full of the noise of the victory".

Such were the circumstances which caused the Afghan defeat at Undhuana. Daud himself was wounded by an arrow and finding that all was lost, fled away from the field, but his charger was bogged. He swiftly jumped on another horse secured from a Mughal trooper, Talib Badakshi but other horsemen came upon the spot. Daud's commanding presence and physical adornments revealed his identity. He was immediately surrounded and hauled up before Khan Jahan. Fainting from

⁵ Rampur Ms.

⁶ Born, *History of the Afghans*, p. 188.

the physical strain of the battle and thirst, he asked for a cup of water. The guards offered him a slipper-ful of water. Khan Jahan put questions to him to which he answered quietly. The Mughal general was temporarily moved at the sight of Daud's kingly bearing and uncommon physical grace. But such a redoubtable enemy could not be kept alive. He was ordered to be beheaded.

Two slashes made at his neck failed ; the third severed his head from the trunk which was gibbeted at Tanda, while the trophy of his head was taken to court and dropped before the emperor at Birar camp on the 22nd July. The emperor's relief was great ; the arch-enemy who had kept Eastern India in turmoil from 1573-76 was gone. His activities had twice called the emperor away from the capital. During the Patna campaign, dismay of Daud was so great among the troops attending him, that he had to take omen by consulting the court sooth-sayear Sayyad Miraki, son of Mir Abul Karim Jafari (diviner) of Ispahan. And on each occasion confidence was given, in Abul Fazl's own expressed words, to the disturbed heart of the generality, by the results of the augury in the verses :—

Akbar by auspicious fortune shall quickly,
Take the country out of the hand of Daud.
Though there be a countless and victorious army,
Yet conquest will come from the advent of the prince.

(Akbarnameh vol. III, 131)

On his returning victorious from the same campaign, he made a pilgrimage to the Khwaja Sahib's shrine at Ajmir and made an offering of a pair of kettle-drums belonging to Daud to the naqarkhana of the saint. When Sayyad Abdullah threw Daud's head at the Jilaukhana at Birar, emperor offered thanks to God for the victory and rejoicing prevailed in the court. "Red and white gold were distributed in skirts on skirts among the courtiers" in the very presence of the emperor. So great was the relief of Daud's antagonist at his death ; and yet historians have

followed the chroniclers of Akbar's court in calling Daud a knave and a fool !

Daud's reign was transitory but it was directed to the consummation of the end — the creation of an independent Afghan monarchy, which in the prevailing state of affairs was impossible of realisation. The Mughal army organisation, its cohesive spirit, its discipline, and its intelligence service were far superior to those of the Afghans, whose clannish spirit was ineradicable and opposition to submit to a common crowned head unconquerable. Hence the Afghan failure to found a strong and durable kingdom in India.

During the short tenure of power, Daud showed gifts of leadership. He won the allegiance of Afghan clans and welded them into a strong fighting force. He conducted a 700-mile retreat from Patna to Cuttack, recalling the historic retreat by Field-Marshal Rommel from the Libyan desert to Tripoli.

Though out-generalled at Tukaroi and Undhuanala, Daud cannot be held accountable for the downfall of the Afghans. The fierce tribal jealousies and family feuds have been their bane for which this fine race of spirited men have remained condemned to obscurity. The saga of Daud's audacity and derring-do, however, is a stimulating episode in the history of the Afghan race in India and will long be cherished by them.

BHARATA MUNI ON MUSICAL VOICE

By AMIYANATH SANYAL

II

THE FINAL TEST of the musical voice that Bharata Muni proposes is that it should be tristhānaśobhimadhurah, that is, it should be musical all over the range of the three places. By the word sthāna or place Bharata Muni means the anatomico-physiological tracts where the three saptakas, generally known as the mandra, madhya and tārā saptakas of musical notes, originate ; though, of course, they find their final articulation in the throat. These places are the chest, the throat and the head, according to Bharata. Often one finds in literature dealing with sound-production, musical or otherwise, a confusion regarding the difference between its evolution and actual articulation. Bharata Muni clearly saw that these three tracts function as resonance boards and are responsible for the peculiarities of the tones in the three corresponding saptakas. Bharata Muni does not, however, use the word saptaka presumably because the actual number of notes he recognises is twenty-two¹, whereas the saptaka or seven-note concept would give him only twenty-one, and also because his main purpose is to explain the different qualities of the notes with reference to the three tracts already mentioned.

This theory of the three places advanced by Bharata Muni also explains the genesis of a composite musical tone in which many subsidiary notes unite with a dominant one. Just as the taste of a ripe mango, though mainly sweet, also contains elements of saltiness, sourness and bitterness, so also tonality of the note, ultimately manifesting itself through the throat, is a

1. Vivādinastu yesamp vīpātisvaramantārap. Ch. 28, N. S.

summation phenomenon. The three different tracts produce simultaneous notes out of which only one becomes dominant, due to will-power, effort and concentration exercised by the artist. This is how the various compositions of notes like similarity (*sādṛṣya*), consonance (*samvāditva*) and medial consonance (*anuvāditva*), already referred to, are produced. It also explains how a voice is to be appraised as *vidhānavan* or well-composed.

Thus accepting the word *sthāna* or place with its implications we are justified in associating the three places with the three successive saptakas: the *mandra*, *madhya* and *tārā*. It may be mentioned here that the English word octave would be meaningless in an exposition of Indian music. The word octave, meaning a composition of eight is derived from the double tetrachord theory of the Greeks. It is interesting to note that one of the many so-called *ṭhāṭa* systems of modern India has accepted the double tetrachord theory, overlooking the fact that the double of one and the same note *sa* (*ṣadja* or the first note) is a categorical as well as ideological blunder.

The verse in which Bharata Muni adumbrates the principles of this final test, runs thus :

*Mahāsthāne 'pyavaisvaryam yasyasau madhurah smṛtaḥ
Trishāne'pi hi mādhuryam yasya nityam vidhīyate
Trishānaśobhityevam tu sa kanṭho madhurah smṛtaḥ.* 479.

The verse means—that voice is called musically sweet which attains accuracy of note-production even in the highest position and that voice is called *trishānaśobhimadhurah* which unfailingly achieves such sweetness all over the three places.

Let us now analyse the verse in further detail. It has already been made clear that the three places may be taken to refer to the three saptakas. ‘Highest position’ in the above verse, therefore, obviously means the *tārā* saptaka. It is evident that this verse deals with the important question of the range of the voice to be tested. The first condition which demands accuracy of note-production in the *tārā*-saptaka fixes the minimum

range for musical sweetness at two saptakas or fourteen notes. It will be noted that a range of two saptakas is neither a rare phenomenon among men and women, nor difficult of attainment by means of practice. But Bharata Muni thinks, as is apparent from the latter portion of the verse that the ideal voice should be capable of a range of three saptakas and should maintain its sweetness throughout.

‘When two saptakas suffice, why demand a third?’—One may question. ‘Is not the third a meaningless superfluity in view of the fact that the possession of a range of three saptakas is rather a rare event?’ But the ideal, whether in respect of health, beauty or any other kind of attainment, need not necessarily confine itself to the limits of what is common or easily attainable. Moreover, the ideal presentation of a song requires not only a faithful reproduction of its pattern, but a full display of the essential notes and their relation to the other notes by means of alamkāra or decoration. Alamkāra, in the opinion of Bharata Muni, is almost indispensable and contributes greatly to the excellence of the musical performance. Decoration is possible within the range of two saptakas, but the full effect of its beauty and splendour can be obtained only by realising it in all the three saptakas. That is why Bharata Muni lays down tristhāna-sobhimadurah as the condition of ideal representation.

Bharata’s views on the importance of alamkāra will be apparent from the verses quoted and explained below :

*Sthāne cālamkāram kuryānnahyurasi kancikām badhyet
 Atibhavoe ‘amkāra varnavihīnāstu yoktavyah. 74.
 Śāśinā rahiteva niśā vijaleva nādī latā vipuśpeva
 Avibhuśiteva ca strī gṛityalamkārahīna syat. 75.*

The ornamentation must be in the right place : the girdle should not be fastened around the bust. Prolific ornaments (if such be needed) are best used without being attached to consonant sounds. As is the night without the moon, the river without water, a creeper without flowers or a woman without adornments—even so appears a song without alamkāra.

The technical rule regarding the use of abundant decoration independently of consonant sounds need not be discussed here. The chief thing to be noted is the emphasis laid on the value of decoration in the art of singing and the thoroughness with which Bharata Muni deals with the thirty-three kinds of decoration-technique in the verses ensuing those quoted above.

In the music of any standard song, the note that is virtually the keynote of the *jātirāga* design has been termed *vādī*, while the note which is made to appear the brightest and in the process of actual singing becomes the *de facto* dominant tone of the interpretation is known as *amśasvara*. By the term interpretation, I mean the actual, living dynamism of a song in the act of being sung and not the notation in black and white. Generally, the *vādī* is the dominant tone, virtual or *de facto*.

Now the dominant tone can acquire its specific character of luminosity and beauty, by virtue of : (i) the relations such as *vāditva*, *samvāditva* etc. subsisting between itself and the other notes in the design ; (ii) the functional aspects such as *amśa*, *graha*, *nyāsa* etc. which appear during the actual process of singing ; (iii) decoration techniques which heighten the charm not only of the dominant note, but also of the song as a whole, even as a nicely-fitting ring on the finger is not only good by itself but enhances also the charm of the hand that wears it.

Thus we find that the dominant note or *amśa* has to be demonstrated in all its splendour in order that the full charm of the music may be revealed. The ideal demonstration of the dominant note is conceived of as that which is achieved in all the three saptakas, the next best being one achieved within two saptakas only. Demonstration within one saptaka is of course a mediocrity to be rejected. Such are the reasons why Bharata Muni prefers the voice which is qualified as *tristhanaśobhimadhrurah*.

Here the question may arise : What about voices possessing a range of more than three saptakas ? Such phenomenal voices have really existed. Europe in the nineteenth century was thrilled

by the voice of Madame Melba ranging over five octaves. Recently a cowboy of America was observed by connoisseurs of music and acoustics to produce eight octaves.

Bharata Muni neither precludes the possibility of such voices nor does he disqualify them. His theory of the three tracts refers to the anatomico-physiological sources of notes, as has already been pointed out. And, although we have associated only three saptakas with these three tracts for convenience of discussion, it does not mean that a larger number of saptakas may not originate from them. Secondly, in accordance with the Gāndharva tradition, Bharata Muni was more interested in the art of musical expression, for which a range of three saptakas is quite sufficient, than in the mere phenomenal aspect of vocal range.

Bharata Muni's attitude in this respect may be more clearly understood from the manner in which he has rejected some of the nice distinctions regarding notes and their character set forth in his source, Nāradiya Gāndharva. Nāradiya Gāndharva mentions the sūkṣma notes which are so fine as to be imperceptible to ordinary ears, but perceptible to persons with yogic powers, and also atisūkṣma notes which are ultra-fine. This shows that the ancient Indian thinkers were aware of notes extremely high or low which an ordinary human ear could not detect. Another distinction is between puṣṭa and apuṣṭa, that is well-composed notes and notes not well-composed. All this shows that our ancients knew all about the existence and value of compound tones as composed of harmonic or harmonised groups of simple pure notes. A third category, which classifies note on the basis of naturalness (prakṛti) and falseness (vikṛti) gives three types: natural, false and natural-and-false combined. Under the type false there is a sub-class termed artificial (kṛtrima) which corresponds to the falsetto of modern conception. It is to be understood that the third category refers, in particular, to the composite character of sounds derived from musical instruments (vide Nāradiya Samgītamakaranda and Samgītaratnākara.)

Bharata Muni does not make use of these classifications, because they have very little to do with the normal and artistic aspect of music.

In conclusion it seems necessary to make a few observations regarding the style of Bharata Muni's exposition. His enunciations and statements may, in most cases, appear dogmatic and theoretical to the modern reader, who indeed may reason that his arguments are all *a-priori* and that he does not disclose the reasons on which conclusions are based.

Bharata, however, cannot be regarded as dogmatic. He himself explicitly advises his listeners to rely not only upon authority (*āpta vākya*) but also on rational deduction and induction (*anumāna pramāṇa*) and especially on actual observation (*pratyakṣa*). Besides these, he prescribes the use of the fourth instrument of experience, viz. analogy (*upamāna*) in cases where the first three criteria fail to enlighten. He says :

Noktā ye ca mayā tatra lokagrāhyastu te budhaiḥ.

Loko vedāstathādhyātma pramāṇam trividham smṛtam. 111.

Vedādhyātmapadartheśu prāyo nātyam pratiṣṭhitam

Vedādhyātmapapannantu śabdācchandaḥ samanvitam. 112.

Lokasiddham bhavet siddham nātyam lokasvabhajam

Tasmānnātyaprayoge tu pramāṇam loka iṣyate. 113. Ch. 26.

Says Bharata : I have generally taken recourse to the three instruments of reason, viz, authority (*vedā*), inference (*adhyātma*) and observation (*loka*). Intelligent men should search out and rely on the actual facts of their times and places. I have not touched upon these latter points, because it is impossible to deal with all the points of thought of the past, present and future, and of all places under the sun. Though principles of the theory of *nātya* are derived from, or based upon, authority and rational inference, yet the the application of the *nātya*, as I have already said, has its roots in the very nature of the people at large. It should therefore adapt itself to the actual facts and conventions of the time and place. Because, after all is said

about principles, the sounds and rhythms which go to constitute the visible and audible elements in the *natya*, cannot but be manifestations closely connected with time and locality.

Bharata Muni does not put forward reasons or explanations generally, because, the selected thoughts and statements had already become a part of the settled, scientific traditions of thought, and because Bharata speaks on an organon of arts (*śilpaśastra*) and not on a metaphysical subject. Any careful reader, indeed, will come across statements, not only of the *a priori* class but also of the *a-posteriori* and empirical classes.

As far as the author's humble understanding goes, none has ever spoken better and more to the point and more purposefully on the subject than this venerable Indian sage of the hoary past. If in interpreting his words the author has been guilty of faulty understanding or expression, the error is his. It is a long long time since Bharata delivered his discourses on music; and his school of theory and practice having long become obsolete, there is nobody to whom the author could turn for enlightenment in cases of doubt or ambiguity.

ACROSS THE OCEANS

By KRISHNA KRIPALANI

ONE OF THE most striking personalities I have been privileged to meet here is the Brazilian poetess, Cecilia Meireles. I was already familiar with her name, for her elegy on Gandhiji had been translated into English and published in the inaugural number of *United Asia*. Of all poems written on Bapu this one had impressed me most, not only because of its intrinsic poetic merit but because it was an echo of our own anguish felt thousands of miles away.

What currents were there between your heart and mine
That my blood should suffer to know that yours is spilled !

When I met her I was no less impressed by her personality which matched the grace and nobility of her verse. She lives in a charming little house picturesquely perched on a tiny hill-top, simple and elegant without being pretentious, as befits a poet.

She has a fine collection of South American folk art, dolls, toys, masks and other objects of utility or festivity with which the simple folk decorate the drab pattern of their lives. They were from different places in Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and other South American countries and showed where the sympathies of this widely-travelled poetess lay.

I was delighted to discover that she was a great admirer of Tagore and was well acquainted with his poems, mainly through the French translations. She surprised us by suddenly putting on the gramophone two records of Tagore's music which she had. It seems that a musician-friend of hers had years ago heard the songs and had recorded the music—the

melody without the words. Though the rendering was far from correct it was sweet and touching to hear the music in so unexpected a setting. She had had a brief glimpse of Tagore when in 1924 his ship had stopped at Rio on its way to Buenos Aires. She was then a young girl and Tagore's fame was then at its height in the western world. No wonder that she can still recall very vividly the flutter caused in her young breast at the idea of seeing face to face the author of *Gitanjali*. She had expressed this sentiment in a short poem which was published in a Brazilian magazine a few months before the Poet's visit. In that poem she implores the "most divine poet" not to appear before her in flesh and blood lest the vision created by his poems be marred. She felt shy when she read out and translated the poem for me and almost apologised for her girlish, impetuous and immature sentiment. I thought the poem would be of interest to readers of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* and have therefore included it in this article, as translated into English by a Brazilian friend, Prof. Armando Soares.

She was one of the principal speakers at the meeting organised by the Indian Embassy in Rio on the Second October, 1948, the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. She has a rich, musical voice and her speech, I am told—for she spoke in Portuguese—fell on the ear like poetry. She traced the connection between India and Brazil from the very hour of the discovery of Brazil in 1500, for the Portuguese Admiral who discovered it did so by accident, having lost his way to India, which was his real destination. "Thus has the discovery linked the destinies of both Brazil and India, and as we study the history of our country, we come upon it casually embracing that wondrous land, India. And our childhood imagination begins to expand. Anonymous voyagers on unknown seas, we soon discover that this is the land where birds speak, where palaces rise overnight to vanish in the morning, where each thing jealously guards its own mysterious force, an enchanted magic that will become ours only after many trials and errors."

“And in this childhood love of ours, little could we grasp the distances by which men are separated, when the same breeze that rustles through the fronds of the palm and the coconut also brings to us the message of the clouds ; when the bamboo grove hums to us its same subtle melody ; when the mango trees cast upon us intricate pattern of their scented foliage ; and our lips are brushed by the same gay kiss of the tamarind and by the freshness and piquancy of the cashew and the coconut.

“And so we drew upon this early love of ours until from amongst the myriad wondrous tales that pass before our eyes, from amid the rustling foliages and glittering gems, the silent stone images found everywhere, the marble lace-work and tropical green curtains, from amongst all languages, all books, two soft-spoken, gentle voices drift over to us from the East. One sings, the other speaks. One is called Tagore, the other Gandhi. One speaks to us from above, the other raises its voice from earth to the high heavens. All of the Divine that may be transmitted has found in the first its voice ; the second teaches man all that may be taught so that he might rise to God. And childhood’s sensitive mind seems to cry out in these lines :

This is, no doubt, the land that thou searchest,
The land of true India that now appears,

“But the child’s heart now belongs to the sad years of adolescence that had to live with war. Amidst the clashing of arms the young heart demands to know in its solitude, in its naiveté : Are these voices not being heard by all men ? Are they not able to teach love and peace and understanding ? And our distressed heart recognises that the voices of the saints and the poets are but a sigh lost in the savage clamour of battles. And it suffers in silence seeing that the centuries have not always made men more divine, nor more human, but oftentimes more savage.

“And yet Tagore and Gandhi were carrying out their destiny. One sang, while the other preached and fought, which

is another way of singing, though in a graver tone and closer to its listeners. Their voices were heard, yes, but forgotten.... When Tagore disappeared we saw him as a bird which after delivering the message of its song soars into the clouds and disappears from our ken. To live with men is much more difficult than to live with the gods. And no task is more difficult than to mould day after day, clearly and truthfully, the frail human clay. To preach is not enough. Acts are also necessary; if men are to be convinced. It is not enough to be understood; one must also prove. As heaven and earth are united, if heaven demands that earth rise to it, earth in turn demands that heaven descend. All martyrs have found it out. And no martyr spares himself.

"The West watched a gaunt but persevering shadow preaching to a vast people, confused and suffering. But it lay so far away, the East. In faded photographs, amongst frivolous news, the oft-repeated news of his fasts, Gandhi was slowly becoming a superficial habit, an everyday piece of news. Men forget easily. Men no longer saw in that scantily clad and haggard figure the symbol of the renunciation of the world, its illusions. They could not see that little by little it was becoming reduced to the clay of an oil lamp where the lighted wick is all that matters.

"Men had forgotten that in a world of obstinate errors, of powerful temptations, his was the voice that taught not to collaborate with error or yield to temptation, in the faith that to resist evil is to increase the Good. Men no longer remembered that that figure, the brief pattern of Man eternally vigilant for a better humanity, was the same who had taught the principle of Non-violence to contrite multitudes, the victory of reason over impulse, of spirit over matter, of life over the machine.

"And when a small machine knocked him down, we saw pictured in the face of men astonishment, an almost irrational astonishment. It is through this fright that one senses the danger that stalks us, the threat of our being witness to the

destruction of thought, of love, of faith, the destruction of human dignity by a small mechanic deflagration in the hands of an irresponsible man...

"We watch the multitude as it advances, varied and perplexed. Caps, turbans, tunics. Women leaning over their sobs. Flowers falling on that small dead body in a shower of springtime, at the end of a world without hope. And the little one dead, like a bird which has fallen asleep under the white wings of its mantle. This frail dead body, cremated with sandal wood, turning into ashes and fragrance, was lost in the waters and in the clouds, as part of the universe, back again into the hands of God. On ground lay the small piece of metal that had cut short this resounding voice. Men forget much, but not this. It may perhaps be necessary to die like this in order to live again, to continue from far away what was unfinished when one was near."

This rough translation of a few excerpts from Cecilia Meireles' speech will perhaps serve to give an idea of the depth of her feeling and the range of her sympathy for India. Below is given an English translation of the poem she wrote on Tagore, to which I have referred above.

Most Divine Poet¹

Rabindranath ! Rabindranath ! Rabindranath !
 Why do you leave the mystic light of the Orient
 Which is the golden reflex of the idols yonder,
 Where idols are the guiding light of everyone,

There is such deep, such great and magic charm
 In your sacred poems, hovering like moons

¹ Originally published in Portuguese in *Para Todos*, 22 December 1928.

Over the World, that I've never known from your song,
If the words were God's or your own.

Hitherto you have been hidden in the glorious prestige of absence...
I fear you are going to appear... My eyes are full of tears...
Beware, the times are pitiless ! Men are ruthless !
All will know that you are of flesh and blood, that you are
human, that you exist !

I suffer because you have been the Unattainable, the All-High,
The Creator, whom none could clearly conceive...
It is excessively and overwhelmingly painful to be a mere man...
Rabindranath ! Rabindranath ! Rabindranath !

And now follows a short tribute in prose which the poetess paid to her idol. This was published in an important daily of Rio² after Tagore's death :

TEACHERS AND PUPILS

That man, in remote India, who closed forever his eyes
that loved so much and understood the beauties and cruelties of
the world, from such a distance had already caused the heart of
the West to tremble.

All those who read his books, will never forget the tenderness, the symbols and the music of *Gitanjali*, which, by receiving the Nobel Prize in 1913, became a kind of lyric bridge between Europe and the Orient. They will not forget the mysticism in which human and divine love intermingle and shine in *Gardener*, *Fruit Gathering* and *Fugitive*.

They will recollect also among so many other stories *The Home and the World* which is not only a story of India or for the Indians, but also a theme of perennial reality for every people, whenever a woman is placed between the brightless quietude of her home and the radiant temptation of ampler environments.

² Originally published in *A Manha*, 12 August, 1941.

How could they forget *The Postman*, *The King of the Dark Chamber* and *Crescent Moon*, the revelation of poetry in the simple ways of childhood?

Rabindranath Tagore's song will outlive all cries of men. Many a tear of tenderness, many a hope of beauty will mark in his books the passage of time and of man.

Nevertheless, this extraordinary man disappears carrying away with him the reality of the most tragic spectacles of life.

For, he was the one who continued SANTINIKETAN, center of peace, a place built by his father and in whose school all was devoted to deep love of nature and to a tender understanding of man.

During the political turmoil in India he was the man who faced Gandhi—for so sensitive and far-reaching was his vision that, even while facing the darker moments of his country, he feared lest the nationalist exultation militate in any way against the sentiment of humanity which he placed at a much higher level.

In founding the Oriental University at Santiniketan, he desired, above all, spiritual intercourse with the West, conserving nevertheless on one side and on the other the virtues and styles characteristic of the live cultures.

Old age and corruption of Europe frightened him long before they reached their maximum. He cast then his eyes on America, where he felt the birth of a more innocent life. Perhaps the contact of an essentially mechanized life and a materialistic interest, too stressed, would have disturbed him. But he believed in the victory of cooperation over competition, the way he wanted a child to be believed in—the motto of his educational orientation.

One day, in his school, a child said to him during the class : “Be quiet, teacher, please let me hear this so beautiful music of this bird that is singing”—and the teacher charmed kept quiet, smiling, for he saw his goal reached—to awake in child the beauties of life.

Now he is quiet for ever more. But those of us that loved him, have not heard as yet a stronger or purer voice that comes to cheer us, taking the place of that which was his.

Tagore was in the Rio harbour only for a few hours, Gandhi never set his foot here, and yet the spiritual bridge built by their winged thoughts endures and those of us who have occasion to sojourn abroad are reminded again and again of the great debt of gratitude we owe to them.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

Rgveda Vyakhya Madhava Krta. (Part II Astaka 1, Adhyayas V to VIII : Pages 473—817. Edited by DR. C. KUNHAN RAJA, Adyar Library. Rs. 15-0-0.

The glory that was Vijayanagar empire in the fourteenth century under the emperor Bukka Harihara, was due mostly to two of its prime-ministers Madhava and Sayana Acarya. Both were Brahmins and learned in all the arts. During those dark days of India and in the very face of the Muhammedan aggression, these two acaryas laid the foundations of a strong Hindu empire and devoted themselves, heart and soul, towards the propagation of the teachings of the *Vedas* and the *Smritis*. The two brothers carried out their activities in such close concert that many have mistaken Madhava and Sayana to be the one and the same person. In his introduction to *Vamsa Brähmana* Burnell, too, has made the mistake of looking upon them as one entity with two names. It is to be seen, however, from the writings of Madhava himself that Sayana was a younger brother and the poet Bhoganath was the youngest of all three.

Although Madhava's famous *Parasaramadhabava* was meant to be a commentary of the Parasara-Smriti, it is in itself a complete scriptural text. The original smriti gives no place to legal science ; that lack is made good in Madhava's commentary. Another of Madhava's famous works is *Kala-nirnaya*. It was during the period 1335 to 1360 A. C. that Madhava must have been busy writing his commentaries. In his introduction to *Parasaramadhabava*, the commentator gives some biographical information e. g. his mother's name was Srimati, the father was called Mayana and two of his uterine brothers were known as Sayana and Bhoganath. They belonged to the Bharadvaja gotra and they followed the *Bodhayana sutra* branch of the *Krishna Yajurveda*.

There is evidence in some temple inscriptions of South India to prove that Sayana and Madhava were not the same person and that they were brothers. In the Aruhala Perumal temple, by the right side of the *gopuram*, one comes across a stone tablet containing an inscription both in Sanskrit and Tamil. This reveals that Sayana's mother was named Srimayi (and not Srimati), Mayana was his father, Madhava his elder and Bhoganath his younger brother and Srikanthanath was his preceptor.*

Madhava wrote many more books. Professor Kane has shown that *Dattakamimamsa*, *Gotraprabaranirnaya*, *Purusharthasudhanidhi*, *Muhurta-madhaviya*, *Smritisamgraha*, *Vratyastomapaddhati*, and such other scriptural texts were written by him. Madhava's *Dhatuvritti* is a famous and authoritative work on the subject.

Bukka-Harihara, Emperor of Vijayanagar, had another counsellor of the name of Madhava who was a heroic fighter and governor of the province of Goa. In Professor Kane's list we come across at least twentyone Madhavas. Our Mahadava (Sayana's brother) assumed the name Vidyaranya Madhava on taking up Sannyasin order. It is remarkable to consider the amount of service such South Indian monks as Vijnanesvara and Madhava have rendered to the secular society. How many of the laity would do as much or much less ?

The commentary of Sayana is our best recourse if we wish to understand the Vedas. None can compare or come near Sayana in respect of what he had done in order to popularise the Vedas. Madhava's industry in the same field of interpreting the Vedas was indeed commendable although his work has somewhat been eclipsed by the more renowned contribution of his brother's. Publication of *Rgveda Vyakhaya Madhava Krita* is calculated to lift the veil of obscurity which has so far shrouded Madhava's name.

Dr. Lakshmanasarup has edited a commentary of the *Rgveda* by another Madhava. This book is called *Rgarthadipika* and the author is described as the son of Venkatacharya. It is obvious, therefore, that the two Madhavas cannot be the same person. The commentary by this other Madhava has also been included in the Adyar Library publication.

The commentary under review consists of 62-121 suktas of the first Mandala. The preceding suktas have been already published in Part I of the book. The remaining portion is to follow. The portion published so far has been edited very carefully. What adds to the special value of the book is that commentary by Madhava is rarely come across : the Adyar Library possesses only one palm-leaf copy in its collection.

However carefully edited this part might be, it is not possible to venture an opinion on the commentary as a whole, as long as all the parts are not issued. Even from what little is available, we can see that Madhava's interpretation may well throw fresh light on *Rgveda*. Sukta 117 of the first mandala refers to twenty-five Rgs. Madhava is of the opinion that out of these, the last fifteen ought to be described as a separate sukta. This is valuable information in respect of the classification of the Vedic suktas, and we are able to say something in this regard on his authority.

Sayana and Madhava are both interpreters of the Vedas and brothers

to boot. Unless each of them had something very special to say they would not have taken the trouble of writing separately the commentary on the same Veda. What that special point of difference might be—it is difficult to suggest from a discussion of a limited number of suktas.

However that might be, it is very necessary that Vedic scholars should get acquainted with this commentary by Madhava. We congratulate the publishers on filling up the void and express the hope that the learned editor would complete this important work dealing with the commentaries of the Rgveda by both the Madhavas.

Kshitimohan Sen.

Indians in the Empire Overseas : A Survey. By N. GANGULEE. New India Publishing House Ltd., London-Demy 8vo. 263 pp. 18sh.

This comprehensive study of the position of Indians in the British Empire is fittingly dedicated to the memory of C. F. Andrews, whose unforgettable service to the cause of suffering Indians overseas endeared him to all lovers of humanity. The author relates how it was the occasion of a send-off to Andrews and Pearson in Santiniketan on one of their early journeys to the Fiji Islands to investigate the conditions of indentured Indian labour there that roused his own interest in the problem discussed in the book. He has gone deep into the entire question and examines all aspects of it with intimate knowledge of conditions of Indian labour both in India and abroad. The author's plea is not merely for justice to the Indians overseas, but to the Common Man everywhere, whose welfare is threatened by continuing racial discrimination wherein lie the seeds of another world disaster.

A close study of the whole question has led the author to the conviction that it is economic competition that lies at the root of racial problems and brings into play the colour bar in social and political relations. And he sees clearly that an Empire which has developed as the political expression of a monopolistic economic system cannot transform itself into a family of nations, whatever pious sentiments titular heads of the Empire may utter on solemn occasions. But he points out with cogent arguments that economic and social classifications based upon race, colour and creed are no longer valid in a world that has learned through the bitter experiences of two global wars the lesson of the interdependence of every nation upon all other nations for its own welfare. It is a creative solution that he proposes for "the achievement of an economy of Abundance", viz. migration of selected peoples to undeveloped areas where conditions are suitable for

their colonisation. Thus he pleads that there should be no restriction for Indians to migrate to unexplored regions in tropical and sub-tropical zones whose resources they are best fitted to develop.

The book is to an extent outmoded by the fact that the desideratum the author repeatedly insists on for the securing of the legitimate rights of Indians abroad, viz. political independence within India, has been realized since its publication. Yet the disabilities of Indians overseas continue, and the remedies he advocates hold valid. As an Indian he exercises the right to point to weaknesses in the Indian social fabric, in India and abroad, to lack of solidarity and concern for the well-being of the whole community among other things. He advocates a drastic reorganisation of the entire range of Indian rural life, so that Indian labourers may not in future be "pushed and not pulled" to countries abroad ; and that repatriated Indians may find a welcome when they return home.

An appreciative and discerning foreword by Leonard Barnes admits the balance and cogency of the arguments presented and expresses the hope that a better knowledge of the facts will lead the British Government to cast off the evil legacies of its predecessors and adopt the creative solutions offered by the author,

S. K. George.

Acharya J. B. Kripalani : A Symposium. Edited by P. D. TANDON. Hind Kitabs, Bombay. 132 pp. Rs. 2-8-0.

It is a set of tributes of love and admiration paid to the erstwhile General Secretary and later the President of the Indian National Congress by some of his associates and friends who have had the opportunity and privilege to know him intimately for many years and who can, therefore, speak with authority. These elegant tributes disclose the diverse aspects of his unique and colourful personality. Acharya Kripalani is a diamond cut with many facets. His avoidance of lime-light and publicity, his hatred of self-advertisement, his courageous advocacy of truth and frank and fearless expression of it, regardless of consequences, his intolerance of sham and ruthless castigation of cant and hypocrisy in all their forms, his self-abnegation and above all, his singleminded unostentatious devotion to duty, not to speak of his incisive intellect and caustic humour,—these are the qualities which constitute the composite self of this great Commoner who rose to eminence by sheer force of merit, without the extraneous aid of family, wealth and the powerful support of friends. The Editor, who himself has contributed an interesting article to the volume, and the Publishers are to be congratulated on the success of the undertaking which will make for a

correct understanding and proper appreciation of this great son of India, who has ever been the poor man's stay and his friend. The toiling masses need Acharyaji in their hour of trial. It would indeed be a sad thing for India if this selfless servant of humanity, this earnest and sincere devotee, this stern realist were kept out of the politics of the country which he loves so dearly and which he has served so loyally.

Elegance of diction and grace and fluency of style together with the keen discernment revealed, make the articles very pleasant reading.

P. B. Rudra

Frontier Speaks By MOHAMMAD YUNUS. Hind Kitabs Limited. Bombay.
204 pp. Rs. 4-8-0.

This is the second edition of a book originally published in 1942. Mohammad Yunus, a young and gifted member of the intrepid Pathan race, here recounts the tale of the Frontier and its people down the ages.

A nation, if it is living, will be more familiar with its ecology and history ; if it is prudent, will revive old links and create fresh ones, if necessary, by breaking those unnecessary barriers which perpetuate the division between man and man. It is sad yet undeniably true that we know little about ourselves. In such a context an almost total ignorance about alien people appear to be only too inevitable. This drawback in our national character may be corrected when we learn to use a larger map in solving and understanding the problems of our age.

Its isolation from the rest of India which had been the Frontier's unhappy lot under British Imperialism was to a considerable extent shaken by the freedom movement launched by the Indian National Congress, which had for its champion in the frontier, the towering figure of Badshah Khan. It is one of the cruel ironies of history that the culmination of freedom's struggle in India has helped once again to create a division between the Indian and the Pathan. In such a perspective the author's vision of a "free Pathan land linked to a free and united India" has suffered an eclipse. But in an age when contact between nations is an inescapable fact, this political barrier should not prevent us from evincing a wider interest for the valiant Pathans of India's borderland. The book by Mohammad Yunus will immensely help in promoting that understanding which very often we sadly lack but should better cultivate for our own and human good.

The author's main outline has been, rightly, focussed on the present, "the present which is so full of significance for India," as Pandit Nehru points out in his Foreword to the book. But one may equally and reasonably

feel that a greater attention to Frontier's past history would have added to its usefulness.

The life of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the growth of the Frontier movement under him has been dealt with in detail in the third section of the book. For the details the author has largely drawn upon his personal experience, for he has himself been in the thick of the movement and worked under the direct guidance and inspiration of the Frontier Gandhi. The book contains some maps and stirring quotations of songs and poems which have a poignant quality. The tone and spirit of the book is best suggested by the following lines : "The anguish in my heart would, if uttered, blister my tongue. But should I suppress it, it would burn the very marrow of my bones." We are grateful to the author for having spoken out, even if his judgment about men and events is by no means infallible.

Saumitrasankar Dasgupta

From Volga to Ganga : by RAHULA SANKRITYAYANA. People's Publishing House Limited, Bombay. 253 pp. Rs. 4-8-0.

Here is a popular account of the history of human evolution using the medium of well-knit and good-to-read short stories. The task is stupendous, even though the scope of the book has been restricted to the evolution of the Indo-European race.

The first story takes us back to the age of the cave dwellers, some eighty centuries in the past, on the banks of the Upper Volga and the last story culminates in the year 1922 with the accounts of Safdar Jung, a champion of the proletarian cause in India. The history of the Indo-European settlements in the different regions of Eur-Asia and the various stages in the social relationships of these peoples have been covered in the seventeen stories that intervene or rather continue the scheme. Most of the stories read like a fascinating account and will on that account attract a wide circle of readers.

The author has emphasised upon the authenticity of his details and the stories, it is said, have for their basis, "various languages and their comparative philology ; records deducible from or written on clay, stone, copper, bronze, iron : unwritten songs, tales, customs, magic rites." Such authoritative support is however not needed and it may be pointed out that social scientists have a remarkable indulgence for their own theoretic preferences in interpreting old records and in fitting them to the "superstructure of their theses: Perhaps we may not be wrong in reading such a bias

or purpose in Rabula Sankritayayana. This is said without any intention to minimise the importance of the book.

The book was originally written in Hindi and Victor G. Kiernan's dependable English translation will add to its accessibility.

Saumitrasankar Dasgupta

Life and Myself. Vol. I. BY HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA. Nalanda Publishers, Bombay. 222 pp. Rs. 6-12-0.

This book starts by giving in excellent English a picture of the kind of home life that liberal education produces if the background of true Indian tradition is preserved. A good few such homes reared remarkable children in nineteenth century India. Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya of Hyderabad fame, a rarity by himself, and his wife Varadasundari, an unspoilt Indian mother with considerable depth of sympathy, gave the country sons and daughters of outstanding qualities. The best known among them are, of course, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the first lady to be the Governor of a Province, and that great revolutionary, Virendranath, who died in exile. The author who brings up the rear is a poet of no mean order and a composer of standing.

Throughout the book runs a vein of frankness, although not always properly restrained, and the spirit that has urged the story forward in the latter part of it is mostly patriotism. If there is a good deal of the first person singular in the book the justification lies in the title itself, and the author must have some peg on which to hang his tale. There is, however, ample reward for the reader in that the author in writing about himself has been able incidentally to write about some of our celebrities with whom he came into personal contact.

A poet of roving fancies, some of the ideas the author has given expression to belong to the category of bold philosophy, not quite traditional but, nevertheless, thought-provoking. He says in his prelude : "Life is, indeed, a kaleidoscope, trembling into accidental patterns of colours". These words may be the key to what the book is meant to represent, and does represent.

There are so many good things in this book that one feels inclined to overlook the faults, but some of these are such as cannot be passed over without comments. One may not agree with the author in all that he says about the Bengali stage. Some of the people he has named he must have seen when rather young in age, and the dig he has indulged in at a well-known group of people could well be spared. The escapades with married ladies should have been scrupulously left out ; they suggest only scandals, and these portions belong to a plane lower than that to which the book in

the most part belongs. Frailties of this kind are only frailties and not deliberate actions, and the author should certainly have exercised superior judgment while selecting episodes for writing.

The paragraphs on Virendranath are easily some of the best pieces of writing in the book: there is in them a sincerity of love and admiration verging on hero-worship. And Virendranath was a revolutionary, and indeed a hero about whom people should know more than what they do now.

The concluding paragraph in which the author breathes the spirit of home-coming sets us thinking. Have we been able to retrace our steps to that real India, which Sarojini Devi so eloquently described as the Mother of Nations, have we really been able to touch the native soil breaking asunder the imperialistic crust laid on layer by layer by the British masters and their minions?

We feel sure that the second volume of this book will be eagerly awaited.

J. C.

Reflections and Reminiscences. By NAGENDRANATH GUPTA. Hind Kitabs Limited, Bombay. xi + pp. 220. Rs. 5-0-0.

The book under review is described by Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha as 'a work of absorbing interest...The recollections and reminiscences of such a highly gifted person are bound to prove not only interesting, but also instructive....' We entirely agree. These autobiographical vignettes by a journalist and a widely-travelled man of public affairs, of one who had seen so much of men and things at close quarters, and yet was able to take a detached and objective view of them, make this book of reminiscences a human document of abiding interest and a significant contribution to contemporary history.

Those who would like to have some idea of India during the most important phase of her recent history, particularly during her struggles for freedom, should read this remarkable book from cover to cover. The author's contacts were many, interests varied and insight deep. His notes on men and things are written in a way which shows his 'marvellous command over the resources of the English language'.

Present-day readers cannot afford neglecting this book for it gives an idea of contemporary India in her proper perspective. The youth of our country do not appear to know how much it has taken to bring India to her present status. It is only right that they should learn to recognise the debt they owe to the immediate past.

We wish there were more books of this kind, and, of course, that there were more people interested in reading them.

J. C.

Alpona: Ritual Decoration in Bengal. By TAPANMOHAN CHATTERJI. With Notes by Tarak Chandra Das. Orient Longmans Ltd. 17, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 13. Rs. 3-0-0.

Portraits of Mahatma Gandhi. By MUKUL DEY. Orient Longmans Ltd., Calcutta. Popular edition : Rs. 5-0-0 (Board), Standard edition : Rs. 8-0-0 (Cloth).

In the drab mediocrity current in our publishing world today, Orient Longmans, it must be said to their credit, have shown a commendable spirit of healthy adventure in bringing out these rather unusual types of production. They are singularly attractive in their get-up and most pleasingly informative in their contents.

Alpona by Tapanmohan Chatterji is a fascinating book both in its style and treatment and is full of information and illustrations which the English-reading public will seek in vain elsewhere. Abanindranath Tagore's *Banglar Vrata* from which the illustrations of the book under review are taken, is, sadly enough, available only in its original Bengali version.

Alpona is a brief but thorough study of those folklore elements, popular festivals and semi-religious cults of Bengal, with which the ritual decoration of the same name is associated. These decorations are usually executed with rice-paste mixed with water on floors, walls, door-posts and low wooden seats. Since all these artistic patterns and designs are invariably done by the womenfolk, the author is quite correct in his comment that the art of *alpona* "is essentially a feminine art". "It is not taught in any school", the author continues. "the mother teaches it to her daughter in the home, and the daughter passes it on to the grand-daughter ; and thus the art has lived and grown from one age to another." Santiniketan is the only place where in the Kalabhavana of Rabindranath Tagore's Visva-Bharati, it is included as a part of the curriculum of art education. "*Alpona* decoration is an important feature in the celebration of festivals and receptions at Santiniketan." The author sums up his thesis with the following significant observation : "The celebration of the *Vratas* shows how faith can be expressed in beauty when it comes out from the depths of the heart."

For such of the readers as may feel interested in technical and detail information regarding the significance of the motifs and emblems commonly employed in this ritualistic art of *Alpona*, the valuable and quite comprehen-

sive 'Notes' added at the end of the book, will be found very helpful indeed. These notes are from the pen of Tarakchandra Das, a Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Calcutta, who, we understand, has made special researches on the subject. These interesting notes have immensely enhanced the value and usefulness of the book. Principal L. M. Sen's black-and-white jacket design, which is quite in keeping with the artist's reputation, has added to its attraction.

New portraits by Mukul Dey always conjure up unforgettable memories of his masterly achievements in *Twelve Portraits* and *Twenty Portraits*, both of which are by now classic in their field. On this occasion, we are served with twelve portraits of no less a personality than Mahatma Gandhi.

The plates are varied in their technique : from drypoints to rapid pen and ink sketches. Chronologically these portraits cover a fairly long period of over twenty-five years—ranging from February, 1918 to Nov. 17, 1945. Most of the portraits in this album, we are told, are now published for the first time. Only, Plate II, it appears, is reproduced from a much more heavily inked impression of the same drypoint portrait that had already appeared in *Twenty Portraits* in 1943.

All the portraits were drawn by the artist direct from life depicting Mahatmaji in attitudes homely and natural. Most of them are, therefore, instinct with the fresh breath of a life which was so dear to every one of us.

Plate I is by far the best in this set of Gandhi portraits. Its original which was duly autographed by Mahatmaji, as early as in 1918, easily claims, in our opinion, a very high place of honour in our National Gallery of Portraits, if and when we are able to establish one.

Nirmalchandra Chattopadhyaya.

Sri Tyagaraja Centenary Commemoration Volume. The journal of the Music Academy, Madras. Vol. XVIII ; parts I to IV. 115E, Mowbrays Road, Madras—14. 205. pp.

The Music Academy of Madras deserves the best congratulations of all lovers of music in this country for furnishing a fairly detailed study of Tyagaraja and his contribution to the music world.

We pay our lip-homage to music but do not apply serious attention to a systematic study of its different aspects. It is the musical compositions which determine the laws of music, just as literature indirectly formulates the laws of grammar. The life-story of a *Vaggeyakara* is in a way personified history of the music of his days. The present special number of the Madras Music Academy not only supplies us with the dates and facts of the great

life of a saint and an epoch-making musician but also presents to a serious student of music, a model plan for taking up the study of musical compositions and their authors.

We have long been neglecting the great cultural heritage that have come down to us from the past. With the advent of independence we can no longer afford to remain indifferent to the self-expressive arts which, after all, constitute some of the main ingredients of our culture. Let all lovers and students of music, both in North and South India, derive inspiration from a critical study of this commemoration volume.

Prabhakar Chinchore.

Bharata Bhajanam. By T. R. VISVANATHA SASTRI. 34, Alarmelmanpuram, Mylapore, Madras. 44. pp. Re. 1-8-0.

This booklet containing about eighteen songs, composed and set to tune by such an eminent Sahitya and Sangita Vidvana as T. R. Visvanatha Sastri, strikes a new path altogether and holds out example of an experiment which may with profit be emulated by the musical composers of today.

The subject-matter, namely, songs in adoration of the motherland, will, without doubt, receive wide appreciation. The language of the songs, is very simple and lucid Sanskrit, and their *bhāva* will be easily followed almost by all Indians. This is a novel way of tackling the problem of a common language for India in a sphere where language occupies but a position of secondary importance as a vehicle of inter-communication. The tunes are mostly based on the popular *rāgas* of Hindustan, and, as such are simple and attractive. By giving both northern and southern terminologies of the sharp and flat notes used in the *rāgas*, facilities have been created for their being practised and appreciated by followers of both the systems. The nationalist approach is perhaps the most effective approach to bring about closer contact between these two main schools of Indian music. The booklet can be specially recommended for use in the educational institutions of the country.

Prabhakar Chinchore.

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Samkalpasuryodaya of Sri Vekatanatha. Part 1 (Acts 1-5) Ed. By V. KRISHNAMACHARYA. The Adyar Library, Adyar, Madras. xxxii + 528 pp. Rs. 15-0-0.

Samkalpasuryodaya. Part II (Acts 6-10), viii 529-938 pp. Rs. 15-0-0.

Mimamsa-Paribhasa of Krsna Yajvan. Translated and annotated By SWAMI MADHAVANANDA. v + 96. Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Pitha, Belur Math, Howrah Dist. Rs. 2-0-0.

Anandaranga Campu of Srinivasa Kavi. Ed. By V. RAGHAVAN. Foreword by C. F. Baron. B. G. Paul & Co., G. T. Madras. vvi + 76-199 pp. Rs. 4-0-0.

Music of North and South India. By S. R. KUPPUSWAMI. Foreword by Prof. S. N. Bhattacharya. 90" pp. Rs. 2-0-0.

Rupadarsini. By M. R. ACHAREKAR. Intro. by G. Venkatachalam. Rekha Publications, Lady Jamsheedji Road, Dadar, Bombay 14. Rs. 15-0-0. £ 1-5-0, \$ 5. 00.

Buddhism and Asoka. By B. G. GOKHALE. Foreword by Rev. Fr. H. Heras. Padmaja Publications, Baroda. 296 pp. Rs. 13-8-0.

Letters of Swami Vivekananda. Advaita Ashrama. Mayavati, Almora. Himalayas. Fourth Edition 501 pp. Rs. 5-12-0.

Mahatma Gandhi. By JAWAHARLAL NEHRU. The Signet Press, 10/2 Elgin Road, Calcutta 20. 171 pp. Rs. 9-8-0.

The Future of the Congress. By ACHARYA J. B. KRIPALANI. Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263 Hornby Road, Bombay, 33 pp. Rs. 0-10-0.

The New Congress. By SHANKARRAO DEO. All India Congress Committee, 7 Jantar Mantar Road, New Delhi. 49 pp. Re. 1-0-0.

Occidental Civilization. By G. S. GHURYE. International Book House Ltd., 9, Ash Lane, Bombay. Rs. 20-0-0

The Ethics of Ambiguity. By SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR. Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. 163 pp. \$ 3. 00.

The King and the Corpse. By HEINRICH ZIMMER. Ed. by Joseph Campbell. Bollington Series XI, Pantheon Books, New York, N. Y. 316 pp. \$ 3. 75.

University Addresses. By C. RAJAGOPALACHARI. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 112 pp. Rs. 2-8-0. Library Edition Rs. 3-8-0.

Young Teacher's Guide. By R. CONESA. Padma Publications Limited, Laxmi Building, Sir Pherozehah Mehta Road Fort, Bombay. 58 pp. Re. 1-0-0.

The Teaching of Civics. By L. B. HAROLIKAR. Padma Publications, Bombay. Rs. 1-12-0.

The Teaching of Sanskrit. By D. G. APTE. Padmaja Publications, Baroda. Re. 1-0-0.

